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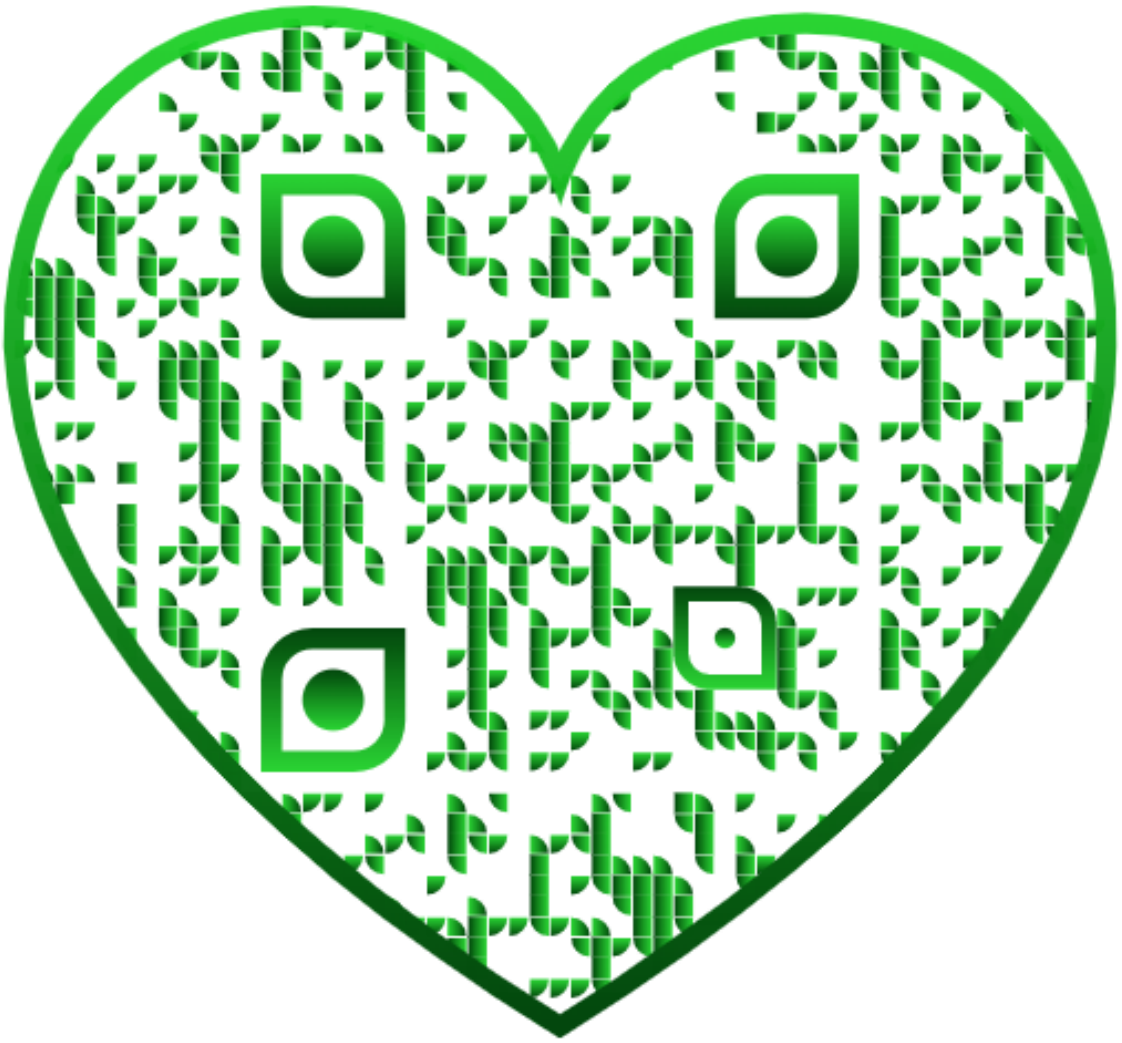

HOLY ROAR

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THE WARMTH OF A DYING SUN

KERRANG! ALBUM OF THE YEAR 2017

CONJURER 'MIRE' 23.02.18

ROLO TOMASSI 'TIME WILL DIE...' 02.03.18

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CONTENTS

ISSUE 1703 JAN 06, 2018

HAPPY NEW Year, readers, and welcome back to the greatest rock magazine on Earth. I hope you had a great Xmas break, and you didn't over-do things *too* much…

Anyway – back to business. 2018, as you'll learn in the pages of this week's mag, is shaping up to be a barnstormer of a year. We take you inside all the news – and a bit of gossip, too – surrounding rock's biggest names, releases, tours, comebacks and more in our huge feature beginning on page 36. But before that, we exclusively take you inside the return of Black Veil Brides. Fifth album Vale marks a new chapter for the band – one who have grown up and thought long and hard about who they want to be in 2018 – and Andy Biersack, as ever, tells us all on page 12.

Elsewhere, the year begins not only with returning 'hellos', but final 'farewells'. Ville Valo has given his life to HIM for 26 years, and as he rides off into the sunset, you won't find a more revealing interview than his final goodbye on page 20.

Until next week, enjoy the issue!

SAM

NEWS

ON THE COVER: Gone, but never forgotten, we remember **Lemmy**, two years on from his passing **(p4)**. In cheerier news, what better way to kick off 2018 than with a huge track-by-track interview with **Marmozets**? Exactly **(p6)**. Plus, we get acquainted with brilliant new band **Conjurer (p9)**.

FEATURES

ON THE COVER: In honour of the late, great Malcolm Young, we had to push this story back a couple of weeks. Now, though, it's time for **Andy Biersack** to talk us through the brand-new **Black Veil Brides** full-length, and the wild ride he's been on to get to this point **(p12)**. Elsewhere in the mag, **Ville Valo** mourns the end of **HIM (p20)**, **Watain**'s **Erik Danielsson** invites us to sink a few drinks with him **(p44)**, and we unveil a colossal **101 Reasons 2018 Will Rock (p36)**. Get ready…

POSTERS

ON THE COVER: It's a **Slipknot** and **Foo Fighters** special! Enjoy through-the-years snaps and some lovely newbies of the two K! favourites **(p26)**.

LIVES

ON THE COVER: **Creeper** bid farewell to Eternity, In Your Arms with their biggest headline shows to date. It's epic, life-affirming stuff **(p48)**. On top of that, **Marilyn Manson** invites his famous actor buddy onstage in London (you might have heard of him) **(p50)**, and **Mastodon** bring the heavy to, er, Wolverhampton **(p51)**.

GIGS

UK pop-punk newcomers **Junior** get stoked for a run of shows – and as long as they're near a gym and a Wetherspoon, things will be just fine… **(p58)**

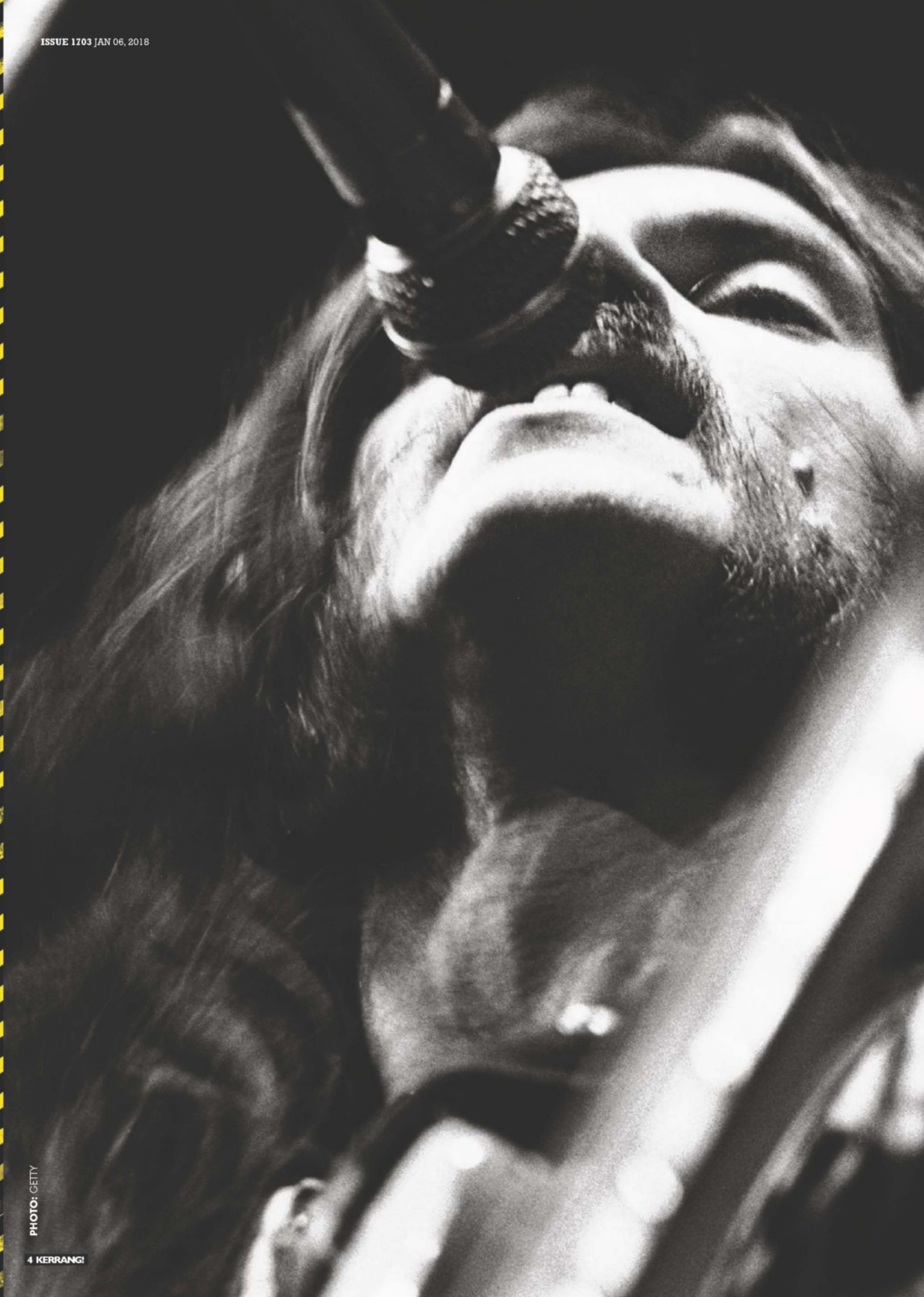
CREEPER p48

The Theatre Of Fear: surprisingly bright and welcoming

VILLE VALO p20

The HIM man got that 'tache groomer for Christmas, then

COVER PHOTO: GRIZZLEE MARTIN **CONTENTS PHOTOS:** PAUL HARRIES



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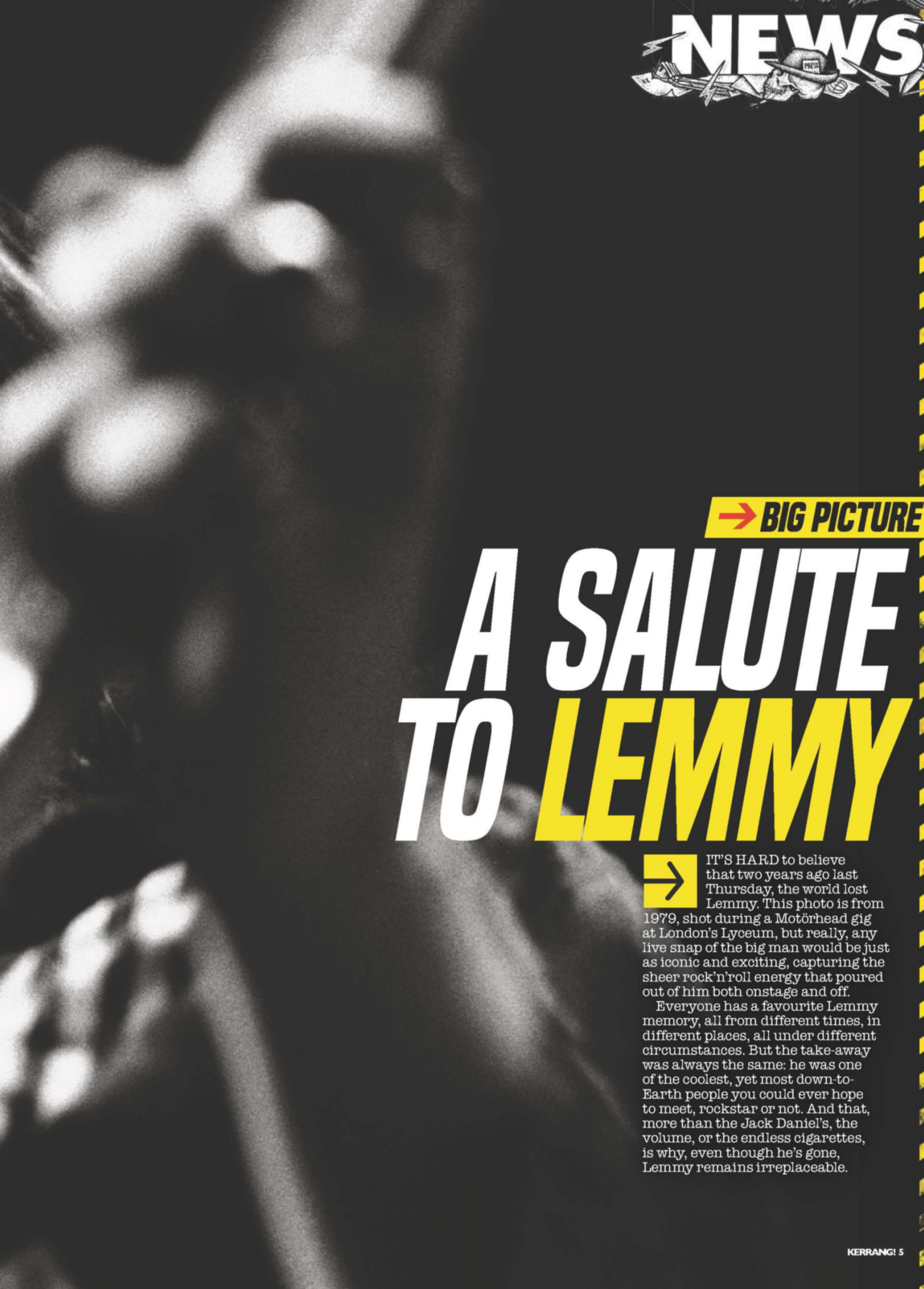


BIG PICTURE

A SALUTE TO LEMMY

IT'S HARD to believe that two years ago last Thursday, the world lost Lemmy. This photo is from 1979, shot during a Motörhead gig at London's Lyceum, but really, any live snap of the big man would be just as iconic and exciting, capturing the sheer rock'n'roll energy that poured out of him both onstage and off.

Everyone has a favourite Lemmy memory, all from different times, in different places, all under different circumstances. But the take-away was always the same: he was one of the coolest, yet most down-to-Earth people you could ever hope to meet, rockstar or not. And that, more than the Jack Daniel's, the volume, or the endless cigarettes, is why, even though he's gone, Lemmy remains irreplaceable.

BIG STORY

IN THE KNOW

IN PREPARATION FOR THE RELEASE OF **MARMOZETS'** SECOND ALBUM, **KNOWING WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, BECCA** AND **SAM MACINTYRE** REVEAL THE STORIES BEHIND ITS 12 TRACKS...

IT MIGHT just be the most anticipated British album release of the year. Actually, scratch that, because Marmozets' second album, Knowing What You Know Now, is all set to be one of the biggest rock releases of 2018, *period*. Rightly so, too, because the noisy Northern sorts haven't just come back with an almighty bang: they've brought a whole arsenal of explosives with them this time. You've already heard Play, Habits and Major System Error, so you know we're not kidding...

It's been a long, agonising four years since the release of their monstrous debut album, The Weird And Wonderful Marmozets, but after putting their well-documented troubles behind them for good, the band finally hit the studio to record its follow-up with famed producer Gil Norton (Foo Fighters, Pixies) last year. Now, those songs are teasingly close to being released for all the world to hear, and it's safe to say we're excited. Yep, you really should be, too.

So without much further ado, get stuck into our revealing chat with two-fifths of the Marmozets gang, Becca and Sam Macintyre, who've kindly given us a sneak peak inside the heart and soul of it all...

WORDS: DAVID McLAUGHLIN **PHOTOS:** TOM MARTIN

1 PLAY

BECCA (*VOCALS*): "We're obviously very family-oriented and this started with a sample of our little sister saying, '*One, two, three, play!*' I sang over it with lyrics I already had knocking around. The words just wouldn't leave me alone after I'd been on holiday in LA with my ex, and he'd split up with me. But it was kind of pieced together. Sometimes I sit down with my notebook and even I don't know where lyrics come from – I just let them flow. There's no crazy story behind this, it just seemed to fit perfectly as a great first song for coming back."

> **"MY BLOOD WAS BOILING, BUT IN A GOOD WAY..."**
> **BECCA MACINTYRE**

2 HABITS

SAM (*GUITAR*): "It was based around the idea of habits that affect other people and not just you. Not necessarily good habits..."
BECCA: "Again, I had lyrics hanging around that felt like they needed to go on a song. We've been brought up together and we've learned that you can't pick at people's bad habits, because sometimes that's just part of who someone is. Maybe things that annoy you should be left alone, because nagging at people doesn't get you anywhere. That's what the chorus says: stop digging at each other and getting carried away, and just have a good time."

3 MEANT TO BE

BECCA: "These words came tumbling out of me. It was a confidence thing. You know when somebody walks into a room and you get a feeling about them? Like, 'What *is* it about that person?' It's that. But also about that feeling amongst us that this is meant to be, we're having fun and we're enjoying it. It was about everyone getting loose and letting life happen the way it was meant to."
SAM: "We focused on that title, like there's a path and a fate for everything. Music often inspires the lyrics in our band. We start playing and Becca just sings whatever is on her mind over it. That's how this happened."
BECCA: "It's Marmozets to a tee."

4 MAJOR SYSTEM ERROR

SAM: "We were writing with Larry [Hibbitt, producer of The Weird And Wonderful Marmozets] when his wife texted him. She works in banking and she said something along the lines of, 'I can see a major system error,' and something about that phrase stuck with me."
BECCA: "It does have a personal aspect to it as well. There's always someone in your life

Becca Macintyre takes time out from music to audition for the new Ring film

Marmozets (clockwise from left): Sam Macintyre, Will Bottomley, Jack Bottomley, Becca Macintyre, Josh Macintyre

who isn't doing too well, and not doing anything to help themselves, but there's only so much you can do for them. When you can see a major issue, you get frustrated inside, like, 'C'mon!' and this is almost like having a bit of a shout at somebody. When that kind of thing happens, sometimes you just have to break the relationship up completely, because it's not going to be any good for you."

5 INSOMNIA

BECCA: "It was a really weird time for us when this song came. It was almost like there was a cloud hanging over everyone. We were going through quite a tough time and I remember feeling dazed, in my own little world. I felt like I'd taken 10 steps forward, but 20 back. I was knackered, panicking for some reason, and I couldn't sleep well. So, I got behind the mic and approached it honestly, and it all came out naturally. Then we went to the pub and everything was alright! I also remember walking around the streets of Bradford after me and my uncle had a row, and I remember thinking that everyone was going around like zombies and becoming aware that I wasn't the only one feeling like I did. Everybody's just trying to get on and survive."

6 LOST IN TRANSLATION

BECCA: "I was in my hotel room in Japan on tour and not having the best day, feeling like I just wanted to write. It was this idea of literally feeling like you're being lost in translation, because you're experiencing this completely new world and the culture is so different that it's overwhelming. We had the best time, but it could be difficult, too, because sometimes people would be a bit arsey when we didn't speak the language. That made me upset, uncomfortable and quite anxious, but I've not let it get to me, because now I've got a song about it, it's like, 'Haha! I win!'"

SAM: "We had no idea there was a movie with the same title and some of those same ideas. We had never even heard of it!"

7 START AGAIN

SAM: "We were in our rehearsal room and I had to kick everyone out, because I was onto something. When I was travelling back from Scotland, before we actually started writing, I started singing the chorus in my head. Becca had some lyrics ready as well."

BECCA: "There's something about that song, it just does something to me every time I listen to it. I love the feeling of it. It's kind of got a war thing at the start – like going into battle…"

SAM: "It's about a fresh start. You might want to start again, but in reality, whatever you're going through is going to take time. It's about figuring out what you need to be able to start again."

8 LIKE A BATTERY

SAM: "When I was living in Scotland, the nearby area wasn't great. My house was beautiful, but 10 minutes down the road you'd find a very different world. The lyrics were inspired by when I was walking around observing what was going on. I was outside tenements, and it was really weird to see such poverty and how people weren't living the nicest of lifestyles, but they still had so much joy in their lives. You don't need to have worldly materials and riches to be happy."

BECCA: "What I love about it is this idea that these kids might come from a place of poverty, but that doesn't mean they can't be the next Prime Minister or make something of themselves."

SAM: "It doesn't matter where you're from or what you've inherited, you can still do something with it, even if that's just being a good person."

BECCA: "People don't give enough credit to just being a nice person!"

9 NEW RELIGION

BECCA: "You know how when you're growing up and someone says if you see a magpie or you walk under a ladder then bad luck will come to you? If you go out drinking and do something stupid, or you make bad life choices or you upset people, that's when bad luck will end up coming to you!"

SAM: "It's about saying to people to respect each other more. You see people slagging off others' beliefs all the time. It's saying, 'Don't be a dick.'"

BECCA: "Everyone's got so much good to give to the world. You can make such a big difference by just saying the right thing, sometimes. Don't hold back and hide the good that's in you."

10 ME & YOU

BECCA: "I was crying when I wrote this out of grief for my nan. I think in writing this, it helped me crack on and get back to doing what I'm supposed to be doing. That was my way of dealing with it. It's a way of saying she'll never really be gone. Every time we perform that song, I'll be able to reminisce about her. I found a way of getting over the really hard part of losing her, but still be able to carry her with us."

SAM: "It's a beautiful song. It makes me happy that we have it on the album. Every now and then when I hear it I will still get teary, but I can't wait to play it live."

11 SUFFOCATION

BECCA: "It's about being in the mix of touring and how crazy it is. We've been in situations most people wouldn't like to be in. Sometimes on the road you feel suffocated, but at the end of it all you've got this treasure. It's about accepting the treasure *and* poison, and letting it be. That's just the way life is. I didn't suffocate or die from touring, but when it's good, there's just nothing better in the world. We've had a fucking great time!"

12 RUN WITH THE RHYTHM

SAM: "It came from me sitting on my sofa in Scotland, halfway through a bottle of red wine when I started singing and playing really naturally. I didn't quite know what I was singing, so we worked together to make something from it."

BECCA: "I had goosebumps when Sam came in with this song. It was like my blood was boiling, but in a good way. I fell in love with it and I was so excited. It's me saying, 'C'mon, Becca, push yourself: you can do better, create new limits!' I can't just do the same things I did a few years ago. That's helped me grow. I'm a woman now. It's a total confidence thing; from the experiences I've gone through and being cool with who I am."

Knowing What You Know Now *is available via Roadrunner on January 26.* ***Marmozets*** *tour the UK in February. See the Gig Guide*

CONJURER

FOR FANS OF: MASTODON, CONVERGE, EMPLOYED TO SERVE

(L – R:) Brady Deeprose (vocals/guitar), Jan Krause (drums), Conor Marshall, (bass), Dan Nightingale (vocals/guitar)

YOUR FAVOURITE NEW BAND

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

WHAT: Inventive, relentlessly groove-laden post-sludge hailing from the Midlands.
HEAR: The Mire, taken from their forthcoming debut simply called Mire.
MORE INFO: Conjureruk.bandcamp.com
CHECK OUT: Conjurer's full-length debut, Mire, which will be released on February 23 via Holy Roar. The band play the album in full at The Black Heart in London on February 22.

SO GOING BY THE 'FOR FANS OF', THIS LOT MUST BE ON THE HEAVY SIDE...

Just a bit. But it's not just standard aggression. Midlands marauders Conjurer deliver everything from guttural doom passages to evil blastbeats, via brilliantly-executed melodies – all shot through with a Converge-esque predilection for the unpredictable. Vocalist and guitarist Brady Deeprose credits this range to the quartet's songwriting philosophy – or, more accurately, their *lack* of one. "There are no preconceptions about what we want from our music," he explains. "We don't put any boundaries on ourselves when we're writing. If we all agree on an idea – which is a fucking miracle – then it goes into the song."

DO THEY NOT AGREE OFTEN, THEN?

Well, they've got a 45-minute record that's packed to the rafters with a ton of ideas, so they must do eventually. They're a group of men with strong opinions, a varied taste in music, and a broad streak of perfectionism. "We're very hard on ourselves," admits Brady. "There are too many bands that play their songs thinking: 'This is fine, it serves a function.' Jan [Krause], our drummer, is a really good filter. Me and Dan [Nightingale, vocalist/guitarist] can be really into a riff, and Jan will tell us, 'No, that's shit.' I hate him for it sometimes, but it's good for us. It means when we do find something we're all into, it's really exciting."

> **"IF WE AGREE ON AN IDEA, IT'S A MIRACLE..."**

HOW DID THEY COME TOGETHER?

Brady and Dan started out in metalcore bands ("Of varying degrees of quality," laughs Brady), but were looking for something more. Dan got Brady into bands like Oathbreaker and Code Orange, and in return, Brady introduced him to the likes of Electric Wizard. "Eventually, we went to see Yob and Pallbearer," Brady remembers. "Pallbearer were great, but then Yob came out and it was like a religious experience. It was the most mind-bendingly, deafeningly heavy thing I'd ever heard, and right there I said to Dan, 'Right, we really need to get a band started.'"

DO THIS LOT HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO HOLD THEIR OWN IN A SCENE THAT'S IN SUCH RUDE HEALTH?

Absolutely. The scene is primed for a band like Conjurer to bring their noise, and Brady knows it. "It's really fucking cool that bands like Gojira and Code Orange are taking over at the minute," he suggests, excitedly. "We'd be happy playing to two people in the back room of a pub, but the size that these bands are getting to is a really positive thing. To be doing what we're doing at a time where Code Orange are getting a GRAMMY nomination is so exciting." Most exciting of all is that even with standards being set so high by the bands Brady mentions – and not forgetting their labelmates in Employed To Serve – Conjurer are releasing a debut album that puts them on course to stand alongside such esteemed company.

WORDS: RYAN DE FREITAS **PHOTO:** JESS JONES

KERRANG! ROCK CHART

MARMOZETS KICK OFF 2018 ATOP THE K! ROCK CHART! EXPECT MORE OF THAT IN THE COMING 12 MONTHS...

	WEEKS ON CHART	HIGHEST POSITION	ARTIST	TITLE
1	1	1	MARMOZETS	MAJOR SYSTEM ERROR
2	3	1	GLASSJAW	SHIRA
3	4	2	GREEN DAY	BACK IN THE USA
4	3	3	PARAMORE	FAKE HAPPY
5	2	5	MOOSE BLOOD	TALK IN YOUR SLEEP
6	1	6	ROLO TOMASSI	BALANCING THE DARK
7	3	5	STONE TEMPLE PILOTS	MEADOW
8	5	2	ENTER SHIKARI	THE SIGHTS
9	2	9	OF MICE & MEN	DEFY
10	2	10	DREAM STATE	WHITE LIES
11	1	11	WATERPARKS	LUCKY PEOPLE
12	1	12	MACHINE HEAD	CATHARSIS
13	4	6	THE XCERTS	HOLD ON TO YOUR HEART
14	1	14	TONIGHT ALIVE	CRACK MY HEART
15	5	7	NECK DEEP	PARACHUTE
16	2	8	I PREVAIL	ALREADY DEAD
17	5	5	BLACK VEIL BRIDES	WHEN THEY CALL MY NAME
18	4	7	FRANK CARTER & THE RATTLESNAKES	SPRAY PAINT LOVE
19	9	1	CODE ORANGE	THE MUD
20	4	1	AC/DC	LET THERE BE ROCK

STAFF PICK!

DREAM STATE **WHITE LIES**

JAMES HINGLE, LISTINGS EDITOR

"One of *the* discoveries of 2017, Dream State are a band bursting with post-hardcore goodness, but with some dark pop undertones. White Lies has vocalist CJ Gilpin baring her inner most frustrations, and letting the world know about it. Expect 2018 to be their year!"

DID YOU KNOW?

CRACK MY HEART **TONIGHT ALIVE**

This is the second single to drop from TA's upcoming new album, Underworld. Talking about the meaning of the song, vocalist Jenna McDougall says: "The concept of cracking the heart [in the song] is to allow the precious, vulnerable self to come through and be free." Musically, it's catchy pop-rock with huge melodies. Lovely stuff.

INSIDE THE SONG...

EVA SPENCE, **ROLO TOMASSI**

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE BALANCING THE DARK AS YOUR NEXT SINGLE, EVA?

"We wanted the next single to be something that carried on the intensity of [lead single] Rituals, while starting to show other elements to the album. It's rare that we put a repeating chorus in a song – but it's there in amongst some awkward time signatures and the jazz influenced intro that make it sound like us."

DID YOU KNOW?

MAJOR SYSTEM ERROR **MARMOZETS**

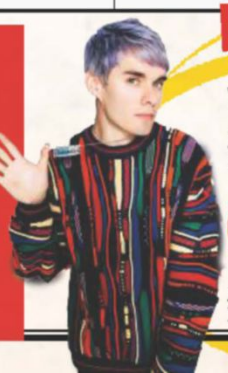
Guitarist Jack Bottomley and vocalist Becca Macintyre see this song with different perspectives. Jack thinks it's about the state of the world, whereas Becca sees it as a song about failing relationships.

STAFF PICK!

LET THERE BE ROCK **AC/DC**

SAM LAW, WRITER

"In Malcolm Mitchell Young, rock lost arguably its greatest-ever rhythm guitarist. He was never better than on this uber-iconic, solid-platinum classic. *'The music was good and the music was loud!'*"



STAFF PICK!

LUCKY PEOPLE **WATERPARKS**

JENNYFER J.WALKER, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

"This track is oddly soothing. It's the audio equivalent of jumping in the tub with a Lush bath bomb."

STAFF PICK!

CATHARSIS **MACHINE HEAD**

STEVE BEEBEE, WRITER

"California's finest metal export have placed their flag firmly in the sand with this one. Rather than repeating the ferocious and elaborately-sculpted metal we know them for, they've branched out into a more melodic but no less head-hurting direction. It's a move that proves Machine Head are a band that should never be underestimated – predict their next move at your peril. Catharsis is a shape-shifting six-minute monster that pairs layers of guitars and bags of atmosphere with Robb Flynn's almost ghostly vocal refrain. Listen to it in the dark and you'll be wanting to turn the lights on."

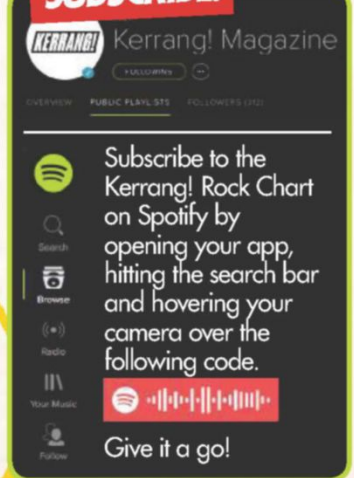
INSIDE THE SONG...

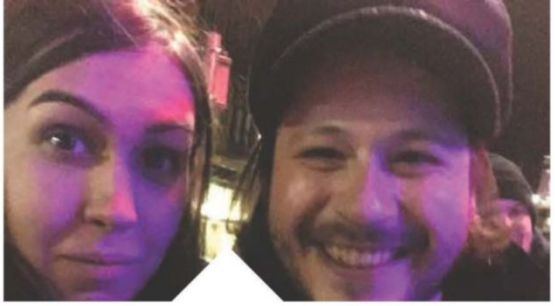
MARK E. OSBORNE, **MOOSE BLOOD**

WHAT'S TALK IN YOUR SLEEP ABOUT, MARK?

"The song's about a break-up I went through. It's about missing that person and wishing things could've worked out differently. It was one that stood out to us quite early on when we were writing and demoing the new album; we always had a good feeling about it. I'm really proud of it – I think we all are."

SUBSCRIBE!





YOU MEET AT SIX

"I finally got to see some of You Me At Six in Nottingham again for their DJ set. I wait a year to have them back here and then Max comes and just mocks me," says **@Bands_thatisall**. *We have no idea what that means, but looking at Max's cheeky grin, we're sure he didn't mean it. And besides, you should've mocked him back for that wannabe-train-conductor hat.*

BUT IT'S BETTER IF YOU BAKE

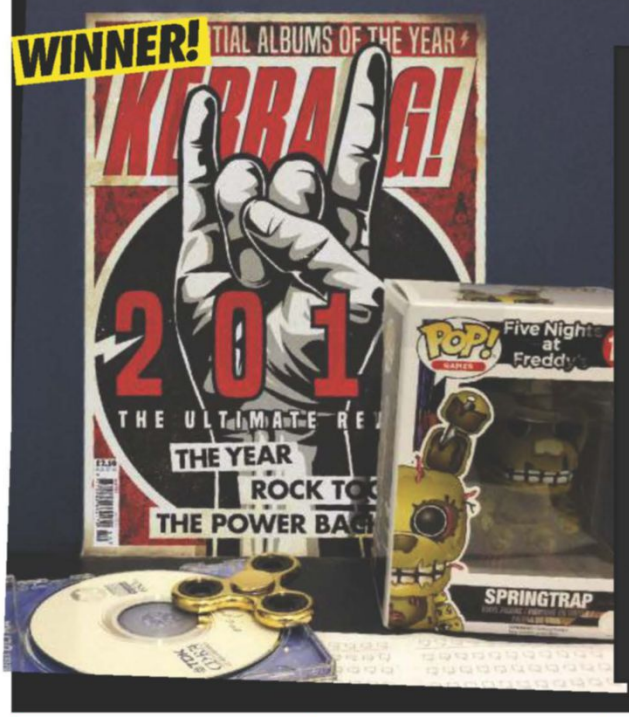
"Cake plus Panic! At The Disco – what could be better? My mum makes great cakes!" says **@IzaRossiter**. *This is so awesome, dude. Your mum seems like a right talented cook – maybe she could knock up some Bread-on Urie, too? Just an idea – albeit a COMPLETELY GENIUS ONE.*

I'M DEFINITELY OKAY (I PROMISE)

"My eldest **@Hollyannlees01** *after meeting Gee Way. Her smile was wider than Gerard's Revenge flares. Lovely fella," says* **@Annie_beth**. *Lovely stuff, guys! And very accurate comparison, too – we've done the calculations and can confirm the maths is completely correct.*

→ KOMMUNITY: YOUR PAGE, YOUR LIFE

WINNER!



SOMEWHERE IN TIME...

"At school we dug up a time capsule because our building was built in 1987," begins **Will**. *"We then had to replace it with a new time capsule, as well as school photos and work. I won the competition to spend £20.17 on additions to show what pupils did in 2017. I added a fidget spinner, a Five Nights At Freddy's POP! to show computer games and vinyl toys, and also the year-end issue of Kerrang!." This is a ridiculously cool idea, Will, and we're super-chuffed that you chose our mag for the capsule. As you picked up the issue you'll know that 2017's Album Of The Year was awarded to Employed To Serve – so we're sending you a signed copy of the record! Email Feedback@kerrang.com to claim your prize.*

NEXT WEEK

WIN! A PAIR OF TICKETS TO WATERPARKS

It's a new year, and we're after a whole new bunch of brilliant stuff from you guys. Some ideas to get you started: 1) A selfie with a rockstar at the gym (because everyone joins the gym in January, duh). 2) A Dave Grohl portrait, but instead of his magnificent hair, it's replaced by Foo Fighters lyrics. 3) A photo of your pet dressed up as Awsten Knight (but please don't permanently dye their hair). On the subject of Mr. Knight, you could win a pair of tickets to see Waterparks on their UK headline tour – so get cracking... Good luck!

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PANDORA BY RAY ZELL Rayzell.com

COME BLACK AROUND

THE "HIATUS", AS **ANDY BIERSACK** CALLS IT, IS OVER: THIS WEEK, **BLACK VEIL BRIDES** RETURN WITH THEIR NEW ALBUM, **VALE**. AS K!'S PAUL TRAVERS HEARS, IT MARKS THE END OF ONE CHAPTER – AND THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER…

PHOTOS: GRIZZLEE MARTIN

It's early in Los Angeles, just after 9am; a part of the morning that many rockstars only see from the other side. But for Andy Biersack, the ultra-driven actor, author, solo musician and leader of the newly-resurrected Black Veil Brides, it's the perfect time to kickstart his day by sitting down to an interview with Kerrang!.

We're talking over transatlantic phone lines about the influence that last year's U.S. presidential election, which was taking place during the writing process, had on BVB's imminent new album, Vale. It's an interesting chat, and Andy is his usual thoughtful, engaged and analytical self.

"The song Outsider was written in the middle of the initial Republican and Democratic primary…" he says, before trailing off.

There's a pause, and then: "I'm drawing a blank right now, sorry. I'm watching a very sketchy van drive down the street outside my house. I'm a little distracted. I'm always hyper-vigilant, especially living in LA. You never know…

"There's weirdos around here. I think it's the small town in me. Even as I get older, it's hard not to acknowledge that being in Los Angeles can sometimes be frightening for a Midwesterner. I've lived here my whole adult life, and eventually I guess you get used to it. But any time I see some kind of sketchy vehicle or anything I go, 'Aaaah… what's happening right now?'"

We continue the conversation, moving on to the subject of Andy's relatively newfound sobriety and the impact that had on the record. The frontman seems focused, but every now and then there's a pause. The van is still circling his home and eventually, about 15 minutes into the interview, it stops and disgorges its occupants into Andy's front yard.

"I'm sorry, one second. Hey, let me call you right back," he says.

Then the line goes dead.

As it turns out, we don't get to speak to Andy again until the next day. He hasn't – thank the gods of rock'n'roll – been abducted, robbed or shot in his apartment in broad daylight.

"It was no danger, it's just something that's been going on, and yesterday was a culmination of it," he says. "It ended up in a very odd way that was almost like a sketch, where these three women who'd been circling my house were performing on my front yard. They were saying they needed to go to the hospital, but every time I dialled 911, they wouldn't go. And then they were saying that they didn't know who I was, but we later found the main girl online and she's a person who's been sending messages to my wife a lot. It was not that great a situation."

As he relates these events, Andy is sitting in his car outside a new house that he's got an appointment to view as soon as our reconvened interview is over.

An overreaction? You might think so on the basis of this incident alone but it is, as Andy says, the culmination of a series of similar events. Essentially, it's the straw that broke the camel's back.

Also, consider the singer's answer when we ask if he's ever been in genuine fear for his safety…

"There have been multiple times in the past few years where we've had death threats. There was one individual who had several times put death threats out there and had attempted to turn up to shows and was apprehended by local law enforcement," he recounts.

"There was also the time when there was a person who was counting down the hours to killing me on Twitter. I woke up on the bus surrounded by police and I didn't really know what was happening. When there's a person who's under attack, they have to refer to them as something, so all day long as the police moved me from one place in the venue to another they would radio in and say, 'The Eagle has landed.' It made me laugh every single time. So in a very dark and crazy situation there was a little bit of levity in that I kept being referred to as 'the Eagle'."

He might be able to see the humour in such a situation, but imagine someone posting a live countdown to the moment that they intend to kill you on social media. Then imagine seeing a 'sketchy'-looking van driving slowly around the apartment you

"I THINK THE BAND IS BETTER FOR HAVING A BREAK"

● ANDY BIERSACK ●

From left: Jinxx, Christian 'CC' Coma, Andy Biersack, Jake Pitts and Ashley Purdy

share with your similarly high-profile wife – singer-songwriter and star of the U.S. version of The Voice, Juliet Simms.

Come to that, imagine multiple people making death threats just because they don't like your band or image or persona.

It would be enough to drive some people into the paranoid corner of a recluse. But Andy Biersack refuses to live like that.

"Most people are good. I believe that most people are basically good, so I don't go around thinking, 'Oh my God, these people are going to hurt me,'" he says. "I hear bands too often complain about their plight of having to deal with people around them. You know, 'Oh God, all these crazy people.' To me, any enthusiasm or positivity that's sent my way is a good thing.

"Having said that, there is a line that can get blurred in today's culture, which is the line of privacy," he continues. "If our bus is parked in front of a venue, it's obvious that you have every right to stand there. I've come to your thing, I'm here in the guise of being a rock singer. Inversely, if I'm at home and trying my best to lay low and get the little bit of downtime that I can get, it's grossly a misuse of fandom to try to approach a person. And a situation like this, where someone is trying to trick me or pull me into a situation and repeatedly circling my home, I just don't think it's acceptable."

Black Veil Brides' last, self-titled album was released way back in 2014, yet Andy Biersack has hardly been out of the public eye in that time. He's released one solo album under the moniker Andy Black, and a second is already well under way. He's starred in a movie – 2017's rock and horror-themed American Satan – started an online TV chat show, written a book, and joined every other musician of his generation by launching a clothing line.

With all these irons in the fire, why does he even need to be returning once more to the band with which he made his name?

"When you're a band it's like being a family. There are moments of complete frustration and moments of complete hilarity and moments of complete love and affection and affinity. To me that's what a family is, and that's what a band is," he says. "We're fortunate that we didn't have a falling out or fight that led to the hiatus. In 2014, we were just burned out. We had spent nine to 10 months of every year on the road for about five years; we put out a record every single year. It was just time to take a break, and I think that we are better for it. I can't tell you how excited I am to be playing music again with those four guys."

Where Black Veil Brides IV was relatively compact and stripped-down, Vale sees BVB – Andy, guitarists Jinxx and Jake Pitts, bassist Ashley Purdy and drummer Christian 'CC' Coma – returning to the more mythic feel and grandiose scope of 2013's Wretched And Divine: The Story Of The Wild Ones. That album was not only a fan-favourite and the band's biggest hit, it was also, according to Andy, their defining moment so far.

"Wretched And Divine was a big moment in terms of

Andy's T-shirt matched his skin tone perfectly

our career, not only because it was our most successful record, but also in terms of the evolution of the band," he nods. "It really represented a change from the guys who dressed up in Mötley Crüe outfits and tried to do glam rock, to actually figuring out what the band was really about. A friend of mine has described In The End as our time capsule song, and it's likely that when our career is over and we've taken our last bow, that song will be one of, if not the most remembered song we've done."

Andy says he doesn't like to criticise the band's previous works – not because he doesn't feel they have improved in their 11 years of existence, but because he doesn't want to trample on fans' memories.

"When I was young, one of the things I found most disappointing in bands was when, later in their career, they'd look at an album I loved and go, 'Oh, that wasn't that great,'" he says. Even so, he seems to consider their last album something of a misstep.

"I don't have as much inherent affinity for the last BVB record as I do Wretched And Divine," he says. "Inherently built into what we are is the over-the-top element, the theatricality of what we do. And I think we'd be fools to not embrace that element, which maybe was the case on the previous record. We strayed a bit from the theatricality and the ceremonious craziness, and I believe that was a mistake."

In musical terms, a key part of recapturing the feel, if not the exact sound, of Wretched And Divine was a return to working with super-producer John Feldmann (blink-182, All Time Low, pretty much everyone). Lyrically, too, there's more than an echo of their biggest album so far. It's not a concept album, but Vale revisits the characters of The Wild Ones, albeit having moved on somewhat from the battles of Wretched And Divine.

Vale also sees Andy writing more directly about certain political and personal issues than he ever has before, at least via Black Veil Brides. The messages are still largely filtered through metaphor and myth, but they reflect some very real world issues.

To circle back to the very start of our conversation, the writing process for Vale started at pretty much the same time as the U.S. elections began to pick up steam. The lyrics for the track Dead Man Walking (Overture II) were written the day after Donald Trump was elected, and Andy says that the fears and turmoil of that period inevitably surfaced in the songs.

"I'm not someone who writes political songs, and it's not meant to be a political record, but it was very hard for me not to feel a sense of anger and anguish towards what was happening in the country, post-election. And now there's the feeling that you have to be able to rise above that stuff," he says. "Without making a political statement about it, I wanted to at least write about those emotions and how they relate to the world that Black Veil exists in. Which is very much a world about self-preservation and discovery and finding a way to defend yourself from the darkness of the world around you."

No-one is going to mistake Vale for Prophets Of Rage, but there does seem to be a sense of anger to songs like Dead Man Walking… and Wake Up. There's also a sense of darkness, or at least having passed through dark places, that hasn't always been present in Andy's writing.

The title itself could have a number of meanings. The anglicised 'Vale' (pronounced to rhyme with 'whale') is a largely poetic term for a valley, but Andy says that the Latin 'Vale' (pronounced more like 'Vall-ay') can be translated along the lines of 'Be well' or 'Be strong'. There's an element of the safe haven to both, but to get there you have to make the journey.

For Andy Biersack, a major part of that journey involved an ongoing battle with alcohol and his own demons. This isn't the singer's first 'sober album'. That was the Andy Black album The Shadow Side, released in May 2016, but Andy says that the period in which he started to write the new Black Veil Brides album threw out its own challenges.

"For me there was a little bit more hope that hinged in the Andy Black record. It was cathartic because I was writing about more personal subjects and what it had felt like to be numbing myself. I'm someone who's always struggled with anxiety, and I knew that I was using alcohol as a way of subduing the anxiety.

"Once I got sober, what happened immediately was kind of a rush of feeling of hope. But they say that when you're newly sober, the six months mark is when it really starts to hit. All the emotional feelings come back and the realisation of lost time and everything else. I would say that the Black Veil record was written at a time when I was at my most emotionally vulnerable."

Do you consider yourself to have had a problem with alcohol, or did you just realise it was something you could cut from your life?

"I was never someone who couldn't *not* drink, if you know what I'm saying. For years I'd been living under the feeling of, 'I can stop any time so I clearly don't have a problem.' But even though I could stop, I would choose routinely to drink until I blacked out and lose long tracks of time. I'd drink before every

UNDER THE VALE

ANDY TALKS US THROUGH THE CREATION – AND MEANING – OF THE NEW ALBUM'S BOLD COVER ARTWORK...

■ "Fans who are familiar with the storyline we presented on Wretched And Divine will know there's this character who's leading the charge in the attempted revolution. He eventually gets thwarted, but he's brought back here, and it reflects how your fears and your allies can tear you apart."

■ "The artwork is by Richard Villa III, who I've known since I was 19, and he's been instrumental in the vision behind Black Veil Brides. I've always had my own vision, but he's had the talent to realise it and bring it to life, particularly on Wretched And Divine."

■ "I'd love to take credit for the artwork, but this one was really all on Richard. At other times we've had a back and forth, but this time he pretty much presented me with the finished product after having heard the album. He poured all his emotions into it."

■ "The masks and the characters tearing apart the figure on the cross were masks and figures that were attributed to the 'good' side of the war on Wretched And Divine. Now you see them tearing apart the figure representing The Wild Ones, because you never really know from where you'll be attacked."

■ "As a kid I yearned to have our version of Iron Maiden's Eddie. Derek Riggs did it for years, which provided consistency, and I wanted that constant style – if not a character. You look at the style of the background, even, and you can see it's a Black Veil Brides record."

"THIS ALBUM WAS WRITTEN WHEN I WAS AT MY MOST EMOTIONALLY VULNERABLE"

● ANDY BIERSACK ●

The kids from yesterday: BVB in their "Mötley Crüe" early years

"WRETCHED AND DIVINE MARKED A CHANGE FROM THE GUYS WHO TRIED TO DO GLAM ROCK"

● ANDY BIERSACK ●

single show. And then it wasn't just every show, it was while we were recording. And then it wasn't just while we were recording, it was while I wrote every song.

"It was the anxiety and pain that I had been chasing away for years. Rather than facing it head-on I was using alcohol as a way of numbing it. And it was certainly not something that was good for me."

Once you took away that crutch, did that mean you did have to face your anxieties head-on?

"Oh yes. The song When They Call My Name is essentially about realising how fortunate I am to have my wife here for me through all of this and to have a friend, instead of me getting drunk in order to not deal with the anxiety and obsessions and all that stuff."

While Andy deals with themes that we might not have seen surface in a Black Veil Brides record before, he says that he does so in a "way that might seem cryptic to other people". He's also both self-aware and honest enough to admit that there's a more formulaic side to the band.

"People kind of tease about the message of Black Veil being a bit linear in that it's always about rising out of your challenges and fighting for who you are," he says. "You can make a Black Veil song pretty easily with a very simple formula based on, 'Okay, you're gonna get out of this and you're the outcast.' But the truth is that is how I have felt throughout my entire life, to varying degrees."

Is that a message with a shelf-life, or do you think it can resonate at any age?

"It still resonates with me and I can only speak and write about my own experience. To me listening to [Bruce Springsteen's] Born To Run or any of these songs that talk about rising up to life's challenges, they inspire me just as much today as they did when I was 12 or 13 years old. So maybe for some people there's a shelf-life. I'm certain there are some people that listen to our music and feel that it's antiquated or that it doesn't synch up to their current interests. But I can't speak for their opinions because I'm the one writing it. And I still feel that it's important to me."

When you started, you were kids playing to kids. Do you think your audience has grown with you?

"Not only has the audience that we started with grown with us but it also seems like there's a turnover in younger people. When we were first coming up I noticed that it didn't matter how many years My Chemical Romance had been around – kids that were the age I was when MCR first came out were still getting into that band. And I remember thinking to myself how cool that was, that there was still so much love and passion from a young audience. It's something that would really be a dream come true if we were able to have that staying power.

"We kind of have two separate fanbases now, after 10 or 11 years," he continues. "You have the people for whom we might represent an element of nostalgia. Then you have the younger audience that's only now getting into us and the angst and the attitude and the rebellion are all things that are fresh and apparent in them."

Four years away is a long time away for any band, of course, but Andy says that one thing he isn't anxious about is the fact that they will have an audience to come back to.

"I'm very curious to see how it goes, but I don't have anxiety about it because I've been active as Andy Black that whole time and I've been able to view the climate, seeing kids come to the shows in Black Veil Brides shirts and ask about Black Veil Brides music. I can also give you sterile projections based on retail sales, but I hate to look at things in such an analytical, non-artistic way, and it doesn't make great reading material."

He's right, it doesn't. Andy Biersack is perhaps at his best when he's at his most mythical and flamboyant. And, with Black Veil Brides' new album, it looks like he's returning to being that guy once more.

VALE IS RELEASED ON JANUARY 12 VIA LAVA/ REPUBLIC RECORDS. BVB TOUR THE UK WITH ASKING ALEXANDRIA THIS MONTH – SEE THE GIG GUIDE FOR INFO

It'd be another two minutes until Andy realised his jacket was on fire

TRACK BY TRACK

ANDY REVEALS THE SECRETS OF BLACK VEIL BRIDES' LATEST EPIC...

1&2 INCIPIENS AD FINEM/ THE LAST ONE

"You have a spoken-word intro, then I think there's something fun about starting the record with a song called The Last One. It's a song I feel sets the tone for the album, both musically and lyrically."

3 WAKE UP

"There are political and global connotations to it, and it's a good rallying cry. It's in a similar vein to [2011 single] Fallen Angels. It's got that anthemic sort of quality, and it's the sort of song you can't wait to get out and play live."

4 WHEN THEY CALL MY NAME

"This is a song that's really dear to me. It's about dealing with my anxiety and having my wife helping me to do that and helping me through these scenarios. On this album I found myself writing more and more honestly and openly about different sorts of issues."

5 THE OUTSIDER

"This song was written during the Democratic debates, and hearing all these issues of personal civil liberties and gun control gave me an interesting jumping off point. It was also the first song released from the album so it was interesting to see the reaction to that."

6 DEAD MAN WALKING (OVERTURE II)

"Dead Man Walking is a seven-minute opus. It was written the day after the presidential election. That was a very taxing time, and I was going through these issues being newly sober, and it all sort of came together into this song."

7 OUR DESTINY

"This was supposed to be an Andy Black song. I remember playing it for Juliet in the car and she goes, 'Oh, is that a new Black Veil Brides song?' I sent it to Jake and Jinxx to do their thing on, and it ended up one of my favourites."

8 THE KING OF PAIN

"The title is a homage to Alkaline Trio. There's a Police song called King Of Pain, but to me it's a play on Alkaline Trio's Queen Of Pain, which was the first song I ever played as BVB on a stage in a high school Battle of the Bands."

9 MY VOW

"It seems like it's maybe a pointed, specific and angry song, but in reality it's me talking broadly about a personality type and people I found were surrounding me. In my drunken phase I feel there were sycophants around me; it's about not letting them sway you."

10 BALLAD OF THE LONELY HEARTS

"When I was younger I faced a lot of scrutiny about what I was able to do and achieve. Most of the people who were awful about BVB in the early days have now fallen by the wayside, so this is my selfish shit-talk song to them!"

11 THROW THE FIRST STONE

"Again, this is about the idea that there are people who are just not good for you. It can be hard to spot them, but when you do the ball of yarn starts to unravel. You go, 'Why was I even hanging out with them?'"

12 VALE (THIS IS WHERE IT ENDS)

"It's the end of the story of The Wild Ones, and to me it's the perfect book-end. It's obviously not the intention, but if it was the last song I ever made it would be a pleasing way to go out."

"MY LIFE IS NOT DONE YET. The HIM part is done, the chapter is closed, but THE BOOK IS STILL UNFINISHED..."

AFTER 26 YEARS AT THE HELM, VILLE VALO IS HANGING UP HIS HEARTAGRAM AND FACING A LIFE AFTER HIM. YET HE IS NOT GOING QUIETLY INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT – OF THAT YOU CAN BE ASSURED...

WORDS: MATT ALLEN **PHOTOS:** PAUL HARRIES, GETTY

Ville Valo is at a crossroads. The 41-year-old frontman with 'love metal' five-piece HIM – Finland's finest rock'n'roll export – is currently embarking on a one-last-trip-around-the-block world tour. After 26 years and eight studio albums, the band he first formed in 1991 are happily and healthily disbanding; Ville is moving into new territories.

"It's like a sad relief, however you want to put it," he says, perched on the end of his bed in London's fancy Sanctum Hotel, dressed all in black, a beanie hat pulled down towards his brow, slashes of eyeliner darkening his face. "I want to get rid of it, I want to be done with it."

Ville's eagerness to move into new horizons is understandable. Over three decades, HIM – the band he formed with school friends Mikko 'Linde' Lindström (guitar) and Mikko 'Mige' Paananen (bass) – have smashed down barriers, drawing commercial and critical success across Europe and America, not to mention a hefty cult following. Now a quintet, also featuring keyboardist Janne 'Burton' Puurtinen and drummer Jukka 'Kosmo' Kröger, HIM have called time on their career at New Year's Eve with a hometown show in Helsinki.

"It's an exciting mixture of tears of joy and tears of sorrow," says Ville, meeting K! in the days between HIM's final two UK shows. "It's going to hit us when the tour is done. It's tough to pinpoint where my head is at. The ride means so much that we don't want to speculate over it too much – I'm afraid I'm going to ruin the

Ville Valo: London, December 2017

magic. You know that feeling when you're in a dream? I don't want to wake up now…"

WITH ALL THE ATTENTION ON YOUR LAST-EVER TOUR, DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE HANGING AROUND AT YOUR OWN FUNERAL?

"Yeah, and it's quite exciting. It's an interesting thought, like when you're a kid and you're super-pissed off with your parents, and you shout, 'I'm gonna die and I'm not gonna invite you to my funeral.' Or when you're super-depressed and you think about your own funeral! Then you think about who's coming and who's not, because everyone's done it at some point, and we actually get to see it in musical terms. It is weird, but it's special, and you don't normally have a series of funerals. There have been more than 40 [farewell] gigs, and each one is the last in that town or country, or whatever. It's like having sex 40 times without ejaculating."

WHY HAVE YOU DECIDED TO END THE BAND?

"We were tired of the same shit, it's very simple. We've been together for a long time. The beauty of us all playing live – it sounds good, the groove is there, we get along and we know each other's bodily smells. It's the family-oriented stuff more or less, a peculiar family. But when you've done it for a long time, at some point it doesn't taste good anymore. We started working on some stuff, it didn't sound good enough, and we didn't get the teenage buzz you're supposed get when you think, 'It sounds nearly as good as Iggy Pop!' It's always stupid like that, but it has to be. This time it felt a bit more like a chore. And I want to do something differently and not to be tied with the schedules of everybody's babysitters, but that happens with life."

HOW DID YOU MAKE THE DECISION?

"I sat down with Mige, the friend I've known longest in the band, because we were the guys hanging on the telephone after tours speculating what to do and what not to do. We took a year's break during which I wrote some music, and then we went to the rehearsal space and I was pretty direct. If it's not gonna sound good then we're going to have to figure out what to do. It didn't sound good. And it was as simple as that."

> "To lots of people, rock is about T-shirt sales, 'likes', thumbs-ups, whatever. BUT THAT'S NOT MUSIC"

WAS IT A HEARTBREAKING REALISATION?

"No, it was a relief. Because we'd discussed it for such a long time, the possibilities, where to go and what to do next. But now the next part is the challenging part: what to do next. I don't have the guys – I don't have people onstage to blame (*laughs*). 'It sounds like shit because you fucked it up!'"

IT MUST STILL HAVE BEEN PRETTY TOUGH TO MAKE THAT CALL?

"Oh, incredibly. HIM is a big part of everybody, and it's not a matter of whether the band is good, or the music is good – all the good aspects and the bad aspects have been with us for a long, long time. But in a way, more than that, because I've known Mige and Linde since I was around nine or 10 years old. We've grown up together, so obviously it's weird. I don't want to think about it yet."

IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE STILL IN A STATE OF FLUX ABOUT IT ALL…

"While I'm doing it, it's feeling good. I don't know anymore… Obviously when it's going good, you think, 'Yeah, it would be great if it was lasting longer.' Then a second later you realise there's a reason for you being here. It's a double-edged sword, or a serpent eating its own tail. But so far it's been mostly positive, and in that sense it's been a perfect tour. It's emotional, and it's like that moment when you die and the film rolls back and you get those flashbacks, like, 'Oh, I remember being here for the first time!' It's quite cool."

SO WHAT HAVE YOU GOT PLANNED AS YOUR NEXT MOVE?

"Several things, but we'll give this stuff time. It's nice now that I've got songs and ideas. I wanna figure out first whether it's going to be a band or a solo thing, and what kind of music it's going to be. It's going to be gloomy and dark, that's for granted. But how much Manowar compared to how much Dinosaur Jr. do I want to have in there? Those are my scales. The loincloth over the long hair and the mumbling? Exactly. Hopefully it's the best of both worlds, whatever that might be. Also it's nice because there's no compromising now, and there are songs I'm going to start working on straight away. 'You need to do something after this break' – that's what everyone's been telling me. After a long working relationship you shouldn't be staying put for too long, because you'll be waking up 10 years later thinking, 'Where is the loincloth?'"

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO SPEND THOSE FIRST FEW MONTHS OFF?

"I'm going to be working in my home studio. I've been doing that as a hobby for a few years, but I'm figuring out what pieces of kit I need. I'm just hoping to explore the sense of loss and the sense of gratitude [of HIM] through music. I'll be figuring out the emotions I'm going through after the HIM period is done. That's how I experience life. I experience it through music, I'll pick up the guitar and start writing and I'm sure some of the emotions that come out of this wild ride will come through."

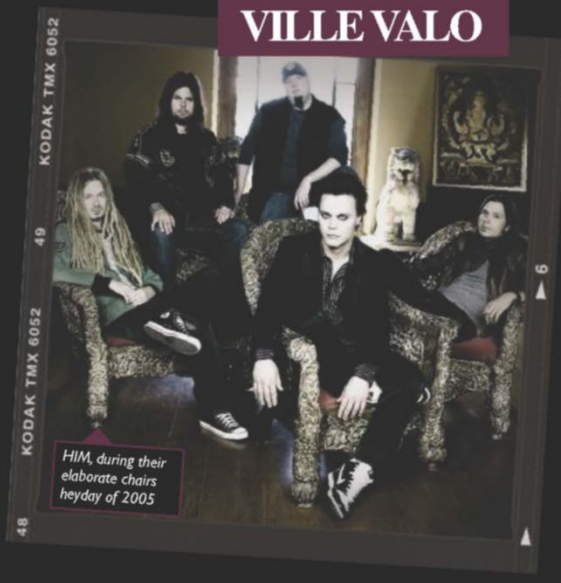
IS THERE ANY PART THAT'S MAKING YOU THINK THAT YOU SHOULD RECONSIDER YOUR DECISION?

"Fuck no, it's way too late for that! It wouldn't be fair. There's several reasons for the band calling it a day. We're not doing it because it's fun, or we wanted to have psychological experiments or a series of sonic funerals. Timing-wise it made sense, and at first we weren't even thinking about a tour. I'm happy that the rest of the guys thought that it was a good idea and that we checked out and that there were people out there who were interested. It's cool to go out on a high, with people enjoying what we do – the good aspects and the bad aspects."

SO THERE'S DEFINITELY NO CHANCE OF A REUNION?

"Not any time soon, no. I don't know what the limit is, or how fast people do reunions, but no, it doesn't make any sense. I think we should follow the rule book of rock'n'roll. I need to do the solo album that's incredibly

Ville diplomatically explains his vision in the HIM rehearsal room



HIM, during their elaborate chairs heyday of 2005

challenging, it gets good critical reviews but everybody hates it and nobody buys…"

THEN THE UNEXPECTED HIT RECORD FROM THE DRUMMER…

"Exactly, so we have to follow that step-by-step, the traditional way of rock'n'roll. There's a few lessons to be learned and then it'll be time for the reunion. And the hip replacement surgery."

When the party's over, Ville will have more time to reflect, but not before – not really. Until then he's fully focused on his last few shows, a chance for fans to "shake their bums" as his band work through a Greatest Hits set. "It's sort of gloomy, but there's a celebratory gloominess to it," he laughs. "It's fun to see people singing along super-loud, smiling, and weeping a bit when the set ends." Still, with his band embarking on their last-ever shows, it makes sense to chat with Kerrang! about his highs, of which there have been many, and the lows, which have proved fairly dramatic.

YOU STARTED HIM IN 1991 – HAVE YOU BEEN SURPRISED AT WHERE YOU'VE ENDED UP?

"No, I think the band should have been bigger. Of course! That's why you start a band – you believe you're the best band in the world. That's why you write a song: that's your world, that's how you see it in terms of music, and in terms of influences. I think all the good bands are like that – it's their statement of intent. Also, there seems to be a lot of art missing in rock. It's about business and T-shirt sales for a lot of people, 'likes', thumbs-ups, whatever. That's not music. Art is something you're passionate about and a way for you to release your demons and get all that shit out. There's way too little of that Jackson Pollock thing in terms of the sonic textures, of people going crazy."

HOW DID LIFE CHANGE FOR YOU ONCE RAZORBLADE ROMANCE WAS RELEASED IN 2000?

"It became a big party, there were a lot of reasons to party. It was like being on a constant high, like an adrenaline boost or a spike that never went down for many years. That was a blessing and a curse for the band. When a lot of bands succeed, they succeed everywhere at one point, that makes or breaks them psychologically and financially. For us, the first album was well received in our home country and then, album-by-album, it got respect in different areas in the world. We had new places to go to and it never got boring, but at the same time it was confusing…"

IN WHAT WAY?

"In a positive way. It's quite romantic to not know where you are, to be a bit of fuck-up. I think it comes with the job as well. Then again, I would have blamed myself if I wouldn't have tried my best to top [boozy poet] Charles Bukowski. I think everybody should figure out what their limits are."

WHAT WERE YOUR LIMITS? YOU WENT INTO REHAB AFTER THE RECORDING OF VENUS DOOM IN 2007…

"I can't remember. The doctor or the hospital could probably tell me that. It's important to keep drama and intoxication in your arsenal when you're a writer, if I could call myself that. But that's the point of balance, you need to be fucked up to create the best bits and bobs, because that's when you're trying to survive. If everything's fine and you're just doing great you're think, 'Oh, I'll write a poem between four and five when the salad is done.' It doesn't work like that. There has to be a need to create the thing because there's no other thing in the world. It has to be as desperate as that."

IT DID GET TOO MUCH FOR YOU, THOUGH, DIDN'T IT?

"Sure, but then you have to get yourself in shape. It doesn't really help to be in a corner and whine. You've always got to pick you up; some people might help you on your way, to get back up again, but at the end of the day, it's you. You dug your own hole, you painted yourself in your own fucking corner. Paint yourself out. And in those terms actually painting yourself is pretty good, working yourself out musically and trying to get rid of the worst things, and trying to find a balance in the unbalance of things, so you can manage. I'd rather manage depression than take ridiculous amounts of pills to even everything out."

TO KEEP THINGS NATURAL?

"At the end of day, people are supposed to be wild and imbalanced. People are sad and they're happy. It seems these days, the world is expecting an average of a person, and nobody is average – everybody is different. They are quiet and they are rowdy, and they are everything in-between. That's the beauty of the world, that's the beauty of letting every flower bloom. My point is about not whining, being a bit of a psychonaut. I think of

it as lessons learned. You have to make mistakes, but you have to learn from your mistakes. Fucking up is very human, it's very important."

SO THE BREAKDOWN WAS A LESSON?

"Yeah, but I don't think I'm completely out of blur. I don't think I ever will be, or ever want to be. And that's not about me drinking or not drinking, or smoking or not smoking. That's not the point. It's the psychological. It's the sense of the other, just being out there. So it's not just about getting messed up, it's about looking for how many days you can go without taking a shower before people in the first class of an aeroplane start to really take notice. That's the cool thing about rock: the better you do, the more haggard you can be. The fancier the cars, the more you can shit in your pants. You think it would go hand-in-hand the other way, but it goes further and further apart. And that's something that should be appreciated."

WHAT WAS IT LIKE RECORDING SCREAMWORKS: LOVE IN THEORY AND PRACTICE BEING COMPLETELY SOBER?

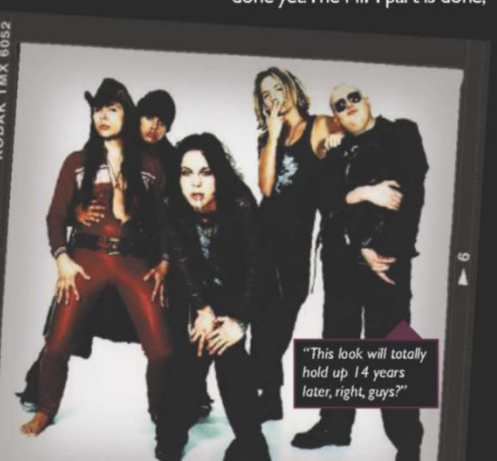
"For obvious reasons it was incredibly intoxicating, because I hadn't been sober for a long, long time. It wasn't about being hammered all the time, but the fact that I would go into a studio and have a couple of glasses of wine, and sing, work on songs, or whatever. At some point it did turn up against me because my tolerance went up. Before you realise, you're drinking a case of beer and you're not even drunk. That sort of thing comes to us all. But sobriety was like seeing the daytime. We had been touring America, I had seen the nightclubs and all the crazy parties. But the next time around I was seeing all the days, walking around the cities and going to the museums and book stores. It was the same amount of energy and money, but spent in a different way. It was interesting, but it was harrowing and it hurt. It felt like the daylight was too bright."

LIKE A VAMPIRE SEEING THE SUN?

"Yeah, coming out of the closet. It was quite weird, it's tough and it takes time. And I think I'm getting better at it. I found it terribly hard being sober at first. Being sober wasn't hard, but it was painful being on tour because it was a very solitary experience. The rest of the guys were taking it pretty easy, they always had – I was the animal. But it felt like I was twiddling my thumbs. I didn't know what to do and it felt wrong on various levels."

WHAT WOULD BE WRITTEN ON THE HIM GRAVE STONE?

"Fucking hell… It would be just a road sign – an arrow to the grave of Black Sabbath. I think the overall work is yet to be done. It's important not to stay put. You have to go forwards wherever that might take you. My life is not done yet. The HIM part is done, as it is now, the chapter is closed, but the book is still unfinished… Everybody says this, especially as they get older: time really flies. But being in a band means it *really* flies. I don't know what a dog year is, but we should have musician years, too. They're three to four years, which is the album cycle – that's your year. You write the songs, you release, you promo, you tour. That's when you cut your hair or change your wardrobe, the things other people do every year. It's a bit weird in those terms."



"This look will totally hold up 14 years later, right, guys?"

WHEN THIS CHAPTER IS FINALLY DONE, IS THERE ANY OTHER ART YOU WANT TO EXPLORE? YOU'VE DONE SOME MINOR ACTING IN THE PAST…

"No, no, no. Let Jon Bon Jovi do the acting and [KISS guitarist] Paul Stanley do the painting. I actually like his painting. It's naive in a cool way. No, music is my art. It's my way of experiencing the world and translating what I feel outside of myself. It's a language I've learned along the way fairly well, or at least so that I feel comfortable, so I think there's no time for me to develop in any other medium that'd be sufficient to get what I want out."

YOU WORKED WITH JACKASS' BAM MARGERA ON A NUMBER OF VIDEOS. WHAT'S THE WORST PRANK HE PLAYED ON YOU?

"He was very respectful, but we've seen a lot of crazy stuff. There are some bits in Jackass Number Two when they cut my pubes out, but I've always been a willing participant to it. I saw the artistic, Salvador Dalí aspect to it, so I didn't feel threatened. I really enjoyed it."

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN COMFORTABLE WITH FAME?

"In Finland the limelight is kinda frowned upon. It's one of those places where they think you're a c**t if you mention that you have money, so that tells you a lot about the country. When we started out in the limelight, I didn't give a fuck. It was great to get into clubs for free, and get drinks for free, I guess it goes with the job. [1999 single] Join Me In Death went Number One in Germany, in the pop charts, and we had this weird thing where we were a pop-metal band with long hair. To see the red carpets and be driven in a super-fancy car to a premiere, not understanding a word of where you're going because it's in German, and clinking glasses of champagne and getting messed up… I think that's really stupid. It's a waste of time."

AS A FINAL NOTE ON THE BAND, HOW WOULD YOU SUM UP YOUR TIME WITH HIM?

"The band has been the Imodium to my diarrhoea. It's kept me balanced, it's helped me function along the way. But I'll let you know once I've really figured it out. I'll send you a postcard."

FACT FILE

BURIED ALIVE BY FACTS

YOUR QUICK GUIDE TO EVERYTHING ABOUT VILLE VALO…

BORN: November 22, 1976, Helsinki, Finland.

LIVES: Helsinki.

EDUCATION: The University Of Life.

BANDS: HIM.

SPECIAL SKILLS: Bringing chaos to calm. "We need to move on to something that tickles our fancy and gets the adrenaline going, the cheeky teenage mischief sort of vibe."

MOST LIKELY TO SAY: "How about I get loaded and write a new anthem?"

LEAST LIKELY TO SAY: "Let's make a salad and get some lyrics down."

HE'S A LEGEND BECAUSE: The inventor of Love Metal is on a seemingly unbreakable creative mission. The next chapter starts here.

Ville remembers he forgot to pick up some more Imodium

"HIM has been the Imodium to my DIARRHOEA"

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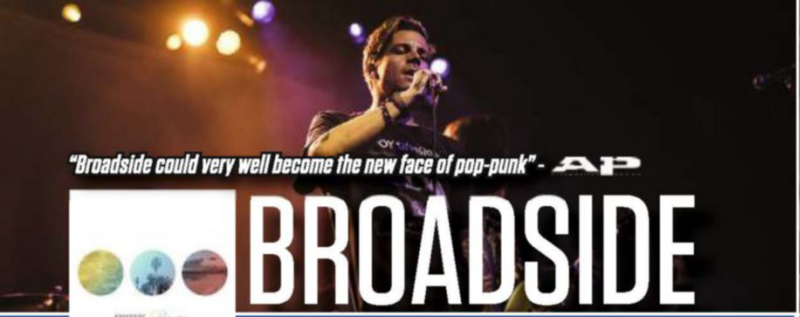

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KERRANG!

FOO FIGHTERS

POSTER SPECIAL

PHOTO: PAUL MOBLEY

PHOTO: PAUL HARRIES

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FOO FIGHTERS
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KERANG!

Slipknot

POSTER SPECIAL

PHOTO: PAUL HARRIES

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PHOTO: TONY WOOLLISCROFT

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Slipknot

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POSTER SPECIAL

PHOTO: PAUL HARRIES

PHOTO: PAUL HARRIES

KERRANG!

FOO FIGHTERS

POSTER SPECIAL

PHOTO: PAUL HARRIES

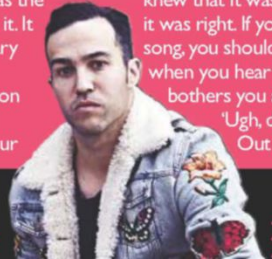
101 REASONS 2018 WILL ROCK

NO TIME TO STAND AROUND SINGING AULD LANG SYNE – THERE'S LOADS OF SERIOUS ROCK BUSINESS IN THE DIARY ALREADY! WHO'S DOING STUFF? **PARAMORE**, **BIFFY CLYRO**, **ALL TIME LOW**... EVERYONE! 2018 STARTS HERE, PEOPLE!

WORDS: SAM LAW, MIKE RAMPTON, PAUL TRAVERS

FALL OUT BOY
MANIA TO SWEEP THE UK

FOB'S NEW album MANIA was pushed back last year as the band weren't satisfied with it. It will finally emerge on January 19, however, a week after their one-off show at Brixton Electric. They'll follow the release with a UK arena tour in March. "I felt pretty terrible about pushing the record back, like I was letting people down," Pete Wentz tells Kerrang!. Frontman Patrick Stump adds: "Finishing the record was a big relief. We knew that it was better, we knew that it was right. If you hear a Fall Out Boy song, you should know it's Fall Out Boy when you hear it, even if it's one that bothers you and you're one of those, 'Ugh, do the old stuff again Fall Out Boy!' people."



ASKING ALEXANDRIA AND BVB TOUR TOGETHER!

WE'RE NOT the only ones excited for this month's double-header. "We opened for AA in 2012, but in those days I'd be drinking a bottle of hot red wine onstage, so I don't know how much I was actually there," laughs BVB's Andy Biersack. "We were two hype bands that came out together, so it's definitely time we did this." Yes it is...

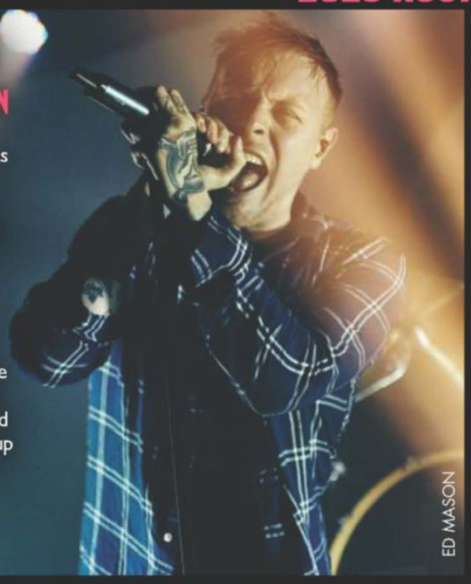
GETTY

YOU WANT MORE PARAMORE? YOU GOT IT...

WHAT COMES After Laughter? Joy, it seems. At least, it does if you're a fan of Paramore and their transformation from pop-punk icons to a quirkier new-wave pop sound on their last album. The Tennessee titans appear to be spoiling the UK at the moment as well. Released in May following the return to the fold of drummer Zac Farro, After Laughter was the band's first new album in four years. They chose to celebrate the fact with the sensibly-titled Tour One, which took in a string of shows, including the Royal Albert Hall in London. Tour Two took in North America, but now they're coming back here with the scaled-up Tour Three, which sees them hitting grand venues like London's O2 this month. Keep spoiling us please, Hayley.

ALLY PALLY GETS THE ARCHITECTS IN

ICONIC LONDON venue Alexandra Palace has got the Architects in, but it's not having a new wing designed. Instead, the UK's finest metal band will be playing their biggest-ever headline show in front of 10,000 lucky fans on February 3. Not enough for you? Well why don't we throw in While She Sleeps and Counterparts for good measure and let that line-up sink in for a while? This. Is. Going. To. Be. Awesome!



ED MASON

UNIFY FESTIVAL ROCKS

THE TWO-DAY UNIFY Gathering takes place on the weekend of January 12 – 14, and what a line-up it is. Parkway Drive headline on the Friday playing breakthrough album Horizons in its entirety, while Saturday sees recent K! Tour headliners The Amity Affliction playing their own special 15-year anniversary set. The likes of Architects, Tonight Alive and ROAM are also on the bill. The only catch? It's in South Gippsland, Australia. Jealous much?

WATAIN RISE AGAIN

IT'S BEEN five years since Swedish black metallers Watain unleashed The Wild Hunt. Now they're returning with the awesome Trident Wolf Eclipse, and they're as epically feral as ever. The album's out on January 5, followed by a sold-out show at the Dome in London on January 12. Get ready to smell that rotten blood they smear on themselves...

MOTIONLESS IN WHITE WORK THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT

WHAT'S THAT over there? It's Motionless In White belying their name by moving our way all dressed in black (probably). The Pennsylvanian horrors will bringing the UK leg of their Graveyard Shift Tour to these shores from January 15 – 28.

MACHINE HEAD GET CATHARTIC ON YOUR ARSES

ARE YOU ready to tear shit up? If not you'd better put your finest shit-tearing pants on, because Machine Head are set to release their ninth studio album, Catharsis, this month. It's followed by their 'An Evening With' Machine Head tour in May. That means near-three hour sets every night. That's a whole lotta 'Head.

ARCANE ROOTS KEEP THE MELANCHOLIA FLOWING

BRIT ALT.ROCK trio Arcane Roots embarked on a UK jaunt in October that saw them play their biggest headline shows to date, but they're treating you lucky people to a double dose of Melancholia Hymns as they continue to tour their second album. The new leg starts on January 11 in Hull and runs into March. Melancholy? Yes. Infinite sadness? Not at all.

THE XCERTS WARN YOU TO HOLD ON TO YOUR HEART

SCOTTISH ROCKERS The Xcerts will return with their long-awaited fourth full-length Hold On To Your Heart on January 19. They've already released a couple of singles from it (Feels Like Falling In Love and Daydream), and the whole album has a massive '80s rock vibe (think Springsteen rather than Mötley Crüe). Frontman Murray Macleod tells K!, "I think these songs will speak to people really directly and simply. That was the key. In my writing I tried to simplify everything, especially lyrically. I really wanted these words to be heard, because there's a story here that should be heard."

BRIAN FALLON
KEEPS THE GASLIGHT BURNING

THE GASLIGHT Anthem's hiatus might not show any signs of ending, but at least frontman Brian Fallon keeps grabbing us by the feels. Second solo full-length Sleepwalkers is due February 9, and the man himself says we should expect some vandalism-based experimentation.

"I was playing a lot with a Vox Continental organ," he explains. "I had to hold down this one note I couldn't reach while playing this other part, and my producer, Ted [Hutt], said The Rolling Stones would stick a knife in the organ to hold down the key. I was like, 'This is a vintage organ, I can't stick a knife in it!' And he just stuck some scissors in!" Brian will also tour the UK in February and March. We're not sure if he's bringing the organ with him. Or, indeed, the scissors…

CONJURER
GET MIRED IN THEIR DEBUT

FROM BLACK Sabbath to Napalm Death, the Midlands has spawned a truly fantastic number of uncompromising riff-slingers. You can add Conjurer to that list as well now. Hear for yourself when the supremely heavy, yet sublimely inventive sludge-drenched outfit release their debut full-length, Mire, on February 23. You can also catch the noise live at their album release shows through that month, too.

DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL
GET EMOTIONAL ONCE MORE

EMO LUMINARIES Dashboard Confessional are set to return with their first album since 2009. The band returned from a hiatus at the start of 2017 with a covers EP and U.S. tour, and now they're properly back with full-length Crooked Shadows due on February 9. Kleenex at the ready…

JAMIE LENMAN
TAKES DEVOLVER ON THE ROAD

JAMIE LENMAN'S splendidly eclectic Devolver album came out in October but – the equally splendid Lenmania all-dayer aside – he's yet to show it off live. That's set to change when rock's most dapper moustache-wearer/Pringles-man look-alike finally brings his warped genius to the people, with a full UK tour beginning on February 1.

BROCO ARE BACK, BABY!

LAST NOVEMBER Don Broco proved they'd really stepped up when they blew the roof off a sold-out Alexandra Palace. Now they're back with third album Technology, due out on February 2. Judging from the reaction to the singles released so far it's set to be huge, cementing the Bedford band's position in rock's big leagues. They'll also be heading out on a full UK tour starting in Portsmouth on February 8.

MARMOZETS
STOP MONKEYING AROUND

TAKE YOUR time guys, it's not as if anyone's waiting. Actually, scratch that… *everyone's* been waiting for the new Marmozets album. It was around this time last year that guitarist Sam Macintyre first tweeted that the band's second album was finished. And finally, Knowing What You Know Now will definitely be out on January 26, honest. And what's more, the band will be embarking on a headlining tour starting in Cardiff on February 2.

THE USED RETURN

THROW DARTS at random pages in this mag and you'll probably hit a band who were influenced by The Used. Seventh album The Canyon came out in October, and they'll be here to play bits of it for you in February. Please say, "Scream(o) for me, Nottingham," Bert.

FIZZY BLOOD GET TINGLING ON HEADLINE TOUR

FIZZY BLOOD have spent the past couple of years creating a buzz like the ultimate Mentos bomb. Now they're heading out on a headlining jaunt in February, on what they say will be their "most complete live experience to date".

30 SECONDS TO MARS
BLAST BACK

HEY, WE know that guy. It's the Joker. No, wait, it's that Replicant-maker dude from Blade Runner 2049. Oh wait, no, it's actually Jared Leto, putting down his Oscar and getting back in 30 Seconds To Mars mode. The frontman has been keeping busy in his other job, of course, but 2018 looks to be very much a 30 Seconds-focused one. There's the huge UK arena tour in March for a start, and recent(ish) single Walk On Water will be followed up by a full album at some point. This will be tied in to a documentary shot in all 50 U.S. states in a single day on July 4, to be titled A Day In The Life Of America.

YOU'LL LOVE QUEEN KWONG'S NEW ALBUM… TO DEATH

THE NEW album from Queen Kwong, out February 23, was originally meant to be titled On The Mend. Vocalist Carré Callaway realised during the recording that she wasn't on the mend, however, and that the mental health issues she'd wrestled with were far from defeated. The album is now called Love Me To Death. It's a haunting work of art that'll grab you right by the heart.

ANDREW W.K.
PARTIES AGAIN

WHEN HE takes a break, he takes a break hard, but Andrew W.K. is back on March 2 with a new record. Bet he has an album launch party to celebrate…

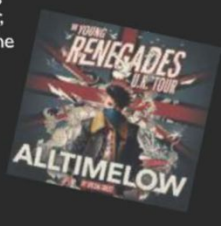
AS IT IS PROVE EVERYTHING IS STILL OKAY

BRIGHTON POP-PUNKS As It Is will be celebrating in March when they play their biggest headline UK tour to date, climaxing at London's KOKO on March 16. WSTR, Like Pacific and Grayscale are on board, too!

GETTY

ALL TIME LOW
PROMISE AN ALL-TIME HIGH

IT'S SAFE to say the UK figures prominently when All Time Low do their diary for the year. In 2017, they gave us a load of smaller-than-normal shows to kick off the Last Young Renegade cycle. This year, though, they're back to the arenas. "The new album was written for these rooms," says frontman Alex Gaskarth. Well that's good, since that's where you're playing…



CANE HILL
BRING THE HATE BACK

NU-NU-METAL TYPES Cane Hill return with their second album Too Far Gone on January 19. And judging by titles like Scumbag, Hateful and Lord Of Flies, it's going to be every bit as misanthropic and abrasive as their debut. Catch them on tour with Motionless In White.

BIFFY CLYRO
DO THE DOUBLE (SORT OF)

NEVER ONES to rest on their laurels, Biffy Clyro tell us that they have not one, but two new albums in the pipeline. "We are working on two records," nods frontman Simon Neil. "One is for a movie directed by Jamie Adams, based around the songs on an album we're making. Unfortunately, timing-wise this has impacted our Ellipsis companion record, because there aren't enough days in the year! The film will be named after the record and will share some dialogue and lyrics. The record will influence the film and then feed back to the music. It's an unusual way to make a record, and that's why I'm buzzing about it – it's a different way to feel inspired. It will be out later in 2018, and then it'll be Biffy opus eight!" No word yet on when that Ellipsis follow-up might appear but come on, new Biffy is always good news!

AT THE DRIVE IN
DRIVE INTO TOWN

FEW COMEBACKS have been as worth the wait as ATDI's first album in 17 years, 2017's in•ter a•li•a. We got a taste on the Royal Blood enormodome tour, but now they're coming back on their own in March! Honk honk!

BLACK PEAKS
SERVE UP ALBUM NUMBER TWO

GOOD NEWS and bad news. Black Peaks have parted ways with bassist and founding member Andrew 'Goz' Gosden. On the plus side, the Brighton alt.metal beasts have just clicked 'Save' on their new album, due in summer.

JUDAS PRIEST
UNLEASH THEIR FIREPOWER

JUDAS PRIEST frontman Rob Halford recently shared the rejection letter his band received after being overlooked for 2018's induction into the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame. Well screw them anyway, because Hall Of Fame or not, the Metal Gods unleash their 18th studio album, Firepower, in March. Expect riffs, stratospheric vocals, riffs, pure blazing metal goodness, riffs and riffs. Then get your arse on down to Bloodstock in August to see them headline the Friday night. And if that doesn't get you pumped, check your pulse: you may be a poser.

CASEY RETURN

WELSH POST-HARDCORE types Casey made a lot of friends on the Kerrang! Tour in December, and rightly so. They're impassioned, inventive and churningly heavy, so it can only be a good thing that they're back with their second album, Where I Go When I Am Sleeping, in March.

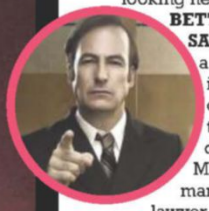
ROLO TOMASSI
GO BEYOND HEAVY

YOU'VE ALREADY heard Rituals, the first new music from Rolo Tomassi in ages. It's mesmerisingly heavy, mixing hypnotic doom motifs with blurry aggression, and you can expect even more flavours than that on the Sheffield sluggers' new album, Time Will Die And Love Will Bury It, due on March 2. "Rituals is only one element to this album which has a lot more to give than just brutally heavy music," said vocalist/keyboardist James Spence. We're happy to say we've heard it, and he's not lying.

SQUARE EYES!

ALL THE BEST STUFF THAT'S COMING TO THE TELLY IN 2018!

FANCY A night in front of the box after all those tours? First of all, you're a lightweight. But good news for you: a lot of great shows are coming back in 2018, joined by some exciting-looking newcomers.



BETTER CALL SAUL returns for a fourth season in the spring, chronicling the continued decline of Jimmy McGill from mild-mannered useless lawyer to full-blown shyster, and there's a third series of **STRANGER THINGS** coming along in the autumn. The mystery! The tension! The intrigue! The Hopper dancing memes! We're excited.

Meanwhile, My Chemical Romance frontman Gerard Way's excellent comic **THE UMBRELLA ACADEMY**, set in an alternate history where John F. Kennedy was never assassinated, is heading to Netflix for an adaptation starring Ellen Page and Tom Hopper. Keeping things weird, Stephen King's **THE DARK TOWER** is also headed to the small screen this year – everyone's just pretending that the terrible film version that just came out, er, didn't come out. There's also a 24-esque series based on muscle-tastic action films **RAMBO** in the offing, said to centre on Rambo's son.

This may also be the year that the long-under-wraps **STAR WARS: UNDERWORLD** finally happens – set in the gap between the prequels and the original trilogy, it's said to be equal parts noir, Western and soap opera, and is rumoured to be arriving in December.

But if you're more into actual things actually happening, you're in massive luck – February brings the **WINTER OLYMPICS** live from South Korea. It runs from February 8 to 25, and should sate your appetite for bobsleighing for another four years, while June and July bring the **WORLD CUP** from Russia. England's first game is against Tunisia on June 18. Expect the squad to be home by June 29, following their last group match against Belgium the night before.

MYLES KENNEDY GOES IT ALONE

MYLES KENNEDY, eh? He's not just one of modern rock's most iconic voices, but also one of its most-prolific grafters. Having fronted for Alter Bridge and Slash, he's moving forward with his intensely-personal solo album Year Of The Tiger, out March 9.

ANOTHER SLICE OF BLACK STONE CHERRY PIE

LOOKING FOR a little whiskey-marinated, good-time rock'n'roll? Here's BSC. Hot on the heels of last year's self-explanatory Back To Blues EP, we can expect their imminent sixth album to take the same dirt track as ever. Good.

JOEY JORDISON'S VIMIC DETONATE THEIR DEBUT

NEVER, EVER count Joey Jordison out. The ex-Slipknot sticksman may have been quieter than during his time behind the mask but, having formed in 2015, his going concern Vimic are readying their debut album Open Your Omen for an early-2018 release. It'll be heavy.

BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE PULL THE TRIGGER ON ALBUM SIX

BULLET HAVE evolved into elder-statesmen of British heavy metal. But, over one year on from single Don't Need You, we still don't have a new album. 2018 will mark their return. "Don't Need You isn't massively indicative of where we're going," grins frontman Matt Tuck, clearly glad to be back. "We did take some things from it: the [down-tuning] and general feeling of heaviness." But, with the diary already packed with a mammoth U.S. tour alongside Avenged Sevenfold, European festival dates and a return to Donington's hallowed turf, where will they fit a release in?

"We've pencilled in mid-May," Matt nods. Just in time for Download in June, then.

WATERPARKS GET SET TO MAKE A SPLASH

POP-PUNK IS in a state of regeneration. And at the front of it all are Texan upstarts Waterparks. The band's 2016 debut Double Dare was a Technicolor statement of intent, but their second album Entertainment (due January 26) should set them up nicely to go stratospheric. And all the touring in March won't hurt, either.

MORE METALLICA DELUXE EDITIONS

IF ANYONE knows how to do a luxury re-release, it's Metallica. Having already released ludicrously exhaustive box sets for Kill 'Em All, Ride The Lightning and Master Of Puppets, the Bay Area titans have reached out for mementos and memorabilia from the …And Justice For All and Black Album cycles. Expect drained bank accounts.

BARK MEETS BITE ON PUPPY'S DEBUT LP

PUPPY'S EXCELLENT Vol II EP caught plenty of ears last year, but their debut album promises an even odder world of off-kilter heaviosity once it's released. We've been waiting long enough…

TRIVIUM HEAD UP THE HEAVIEST TOUR OF THE YEAR

YOU WANT heavy? Trivium gives you heavy, baby. And not just on last year's The Sin And The Sentence. For their UK tour in April, they're bringing rising Texan thrashers Power Trip, terrifying UK death metallers Venom Prison and hotter-than-the-sun Pittsburgh hardcore revolutionaries Code Orange along for the ride. Heavy? Yeah…

FIVE FINGER DEATH PUNCH TAKE ANOTHER SWING

AND SO, the rollercoaster ride that is Five Finger Death Punch continues apace, as the Las Vegas metallers are readying their undoubtedly punishing seventh album. Having put frontman Ivan Moody's substance issues and their lawsuit with record label Prospect Park to bed, we can expect another bombardment of knuckle-sandwiches and manly emotions, stripped bare. Wahey!

DEAD! COME ALIVE WITH THEIR DEBUT FULL-LENGTH

"TWO GUITARISTS, five drummers, four broken bones, two crushed wrists, a van wiped out by a truck and we're finally here," proclaim London punks Dead!. It's been a long road making their debut album The Golden Age Of Not Even Trying, but it will appear on January 26, followed by touring for the rest of the year.

MOOSE BLOOD TAKE ANOTHER STEP UP

MOOSE BLOOD already have their sound nailed. 2014 debut I'll Keep You In Mind, From Time To Time benchmarked their emo sentimentalism, while 2016 follow-up Blush perfected the formula. Cheerily-titled third album I Don't Think I Can Do This Anymore, out March 9, promises to hold the course into their biggest UK tour to date in March.

EVANESCENCE GO ORCHESTRAL

EVANESCENCE HAVEN'T got much left to prove. 2017's electro-orchestral opus Synthesis, however, confirmed that Amy Lee is still capable of daring reinvention. March and April's live shows promise to steer that creative resurgence into the live arena – with the band not just playing with an orchestra, but becoming part of it.

CONVERGE WILL BE CUTTING A SWATHE ACROSS THE UNITED KINGDOM

TWENTY-EIGHT years in, Converge simply won't let up. Searing ninth album The Dusk In Us put the Massachusetts hardcore masters' stock at an all-time high in 2017. Following frontman Jacob Bannon's curation at the Netherlands' Roadburn Festival in April, they'll be back to gouge chunks out of the UK with NOLA sludge masters Crowbar, U.S. sluggers Thou and sublime Finnish post-punks Grave Pleasures in tow.

THE AMITY AFFLICTION GO ANOTHER ROUND

2017 WAS a pretty awesome year for The Amity Affliction, what with the Kerrang! Tour and all. 2018, though, should be a whole other ball game. They'll kick-off headlining Australia's sold-out UNIFY Gathering on January 13, but after that they'll finally be releasing their follow-up to 2016's This Could Be Heartbreak album at some point. Arses will be kicked.

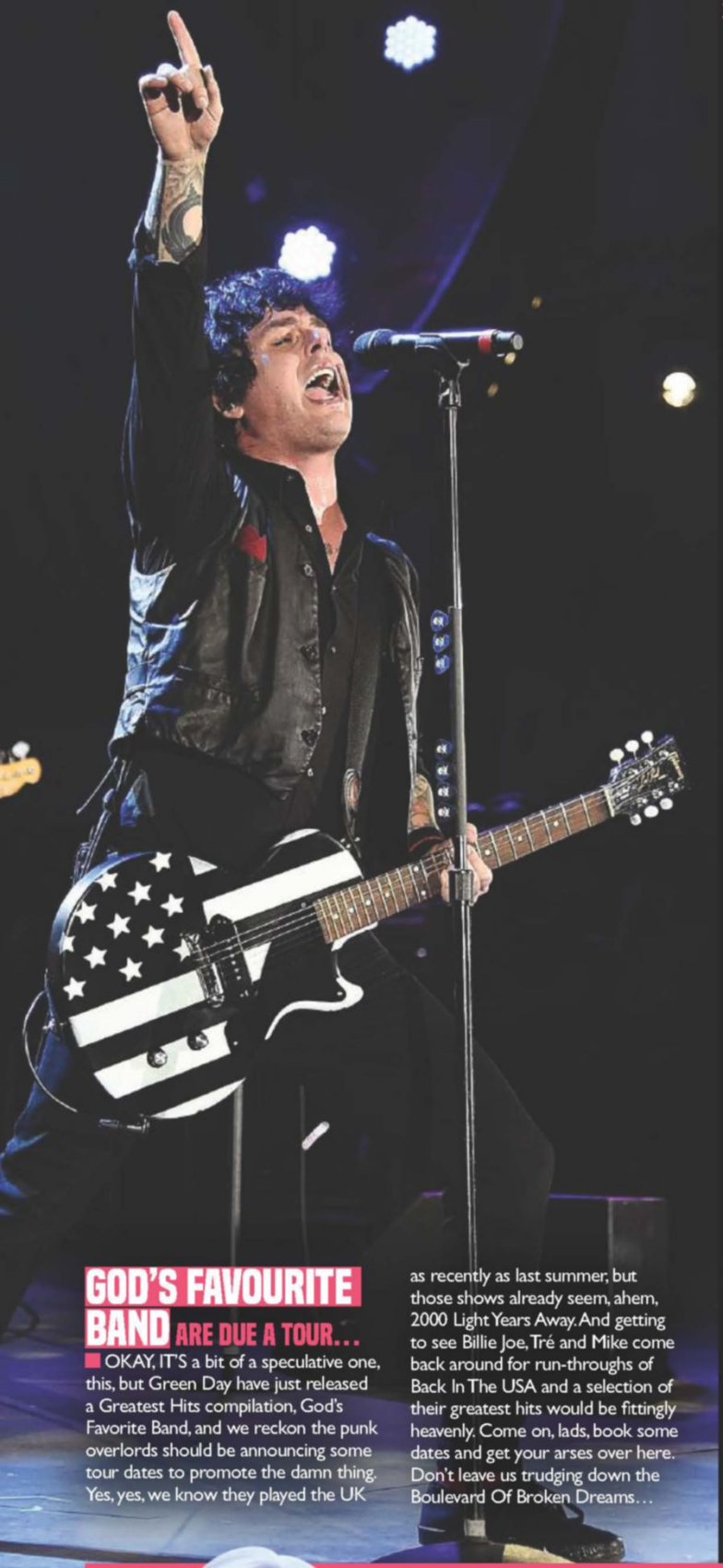
TURNSTILE DELIVER A NEW HARDCORE REVOLUTION

TURNSTILE'S 2015 debut Nonstop Feeling marked the Baltimore crew out as one of the most important acts of the current hardcore resurgence. A mix of integrity and invention courses through their music, and second LP Time & Space, due February 23, promises another tantalising expansion of their sound. First release Real Thing hinted at trippy ambience and defiant weirdness, while second single Generator comes over as a slamming oddity ready to tie circle-pits in knots.

WILL WE FINALLY SEE THE NEW TOOL ALBUM?

NOW ALMOST 12 years on from astonishing fourth album 10,000 Days, a new Tool record may finally be on the horizon. Drummer Danny Carey tells us it's out in 2018, and that "the songs are way too long for the radio". But he wouldn't give us a title or release date. While we're waiting, frontman Maynard James Keenan has been hard at work with A Perfect Circle, whose new album is expected in the spring. Danny meanwhile, has teamed up with Mastodon's Brent Hinds in the brilliantly-named Legend Of The Seagullmen. Their debut album's out on February 9. More on that next week…

GETTY



GOD'S FAVOURITE BAND ARE DUE A TOUR...

OKAY, IT'S a bit of a speculative one, this, but Green Day have just released a Greatest Hits compilation, God's Favorite Band, and we reckon the punk overlords should be announcing some tour dates to promote the damn thing. Yes, yes, we know they played the UK as recently as last summer, but those shows already seem, ahem, 2000 Light Years Away. And getting to see Billie Joe, Tré and Mike come back around for run-throughs of Back In The USA and a selection of their greatest hits would be fittingly heavenly. Come on, lads, book some dates and get your arses over here. Don't leave us trudging down the Boulevard Of Broken Dreams...

HECK MAN RETURNS WITH HCBP

ONE OF the lowlights of 2017 was the abrupt dissolution of hardcore hellraisers HECK. The re-emergence of frontman Matt Reynolds with HCBP (Haggard Cat Bothday Present, obviously), however, will be a 2018 highlight. Following on from 2013 debut Charger, this first release since "deciding to take HCBP seriously" promises even more unhinged, genre-bending brilliance.

LOWER THAN ATLANTIS TAKE A (LONG) WANDER OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

IT'S SHIT when touring bands always seem to pass your hometown by. Major kudos, then, to Lower Than Atlantis, who are going on a mammoth tour of the UK's lesser-visited touring stops. Starting off at Lincoln's Engine Shed on April 2 and wrapping up at Sheffield's Plug on May 14, they'll definitely be playing somewhere near you.

BOSTON MANOR OPEN THE DOORS ON ALBUM NUMBER TWO

FRESH FROM their firecracker stint on the 2017 Kerrang! Tour, Blackpool outfit Boston Manor feel ready to kick on to bigger things. 2016 debut Be Nothing started a movement, but the more aggressive musicality and lyrical depth of latest single Drowned In Gold signposts achievements looming. "It's a song about people being followers; people who never question anything and surround themselves with trivialities and mundanity," frontman Henry Cox explains. Theirs are far more adventurous minds.

SKINDRED ON TOUR

SURELY NO-ONE packs more vibrant positivity and unabashed energy into their music than Skindred. Nor does anyone manage to ramp that energy further in the live arena. So roll on their massive UK tour in April. Shirts at the ready!

TONIGHT ALIVE SHAPESHIFT AGAIN

QUIET FOR much of last year, the end of 2017 saw a whirlwind of activity from Tonight Alive. Linchpin guitarist Whakaio Taahi left the band. New album Underworld was announced for imminent release on January 12. Most importantly, lead single Temple signposted a return to the heartfelt vocals and gritty emotion that sold us on the band in the first place. "I've opened my heart [on these songs]," explains singer Jenna McDougall. "It's so much nicer when you're real with people. Artists can be really good liars and that's something I'm trying to get away from." And, with tour dates looming in March, have they consolidated the TA line-up? "We're not ready to bring anybody new into our camp just yet," Jenna smiles. "I've considered learning Jake [Hardy]'s parts, so that he could play Whak's. But I'm not a performing guitarist! I'm a power-chord, bedroom guitarist at best. I'm ready to go on tour, though!"

ROCK HOLLYWOOD

THE BEST MOVIES COMING YOUR WAY THIS YEAR

IF YOU'VE ever wanted to see the car from Back To The Future fitted with the talking bits from Knight Rider, you're in luck this year, as Steven Spielberg's reference-laden VR adventure **READY PLAYER ONE** (the one with the weird-length-leg poster the internet went to town on) is coming in March. It's also a decent year for buff dudes battling things and saying cool one-liners. Which applies every year, really, but 2018 seems particularly good for it. May brings **AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR**, the 19th entry in the Marvel Cinematic Universe that brings together The Avengers and Guardians Of The Galaxy to battle big-chinned intergalactic rotter Thanos and save the universe. So many hench dudes called Chris, united at last! There's more space-swashbuckling in May, courtesy of **SOLO**, the origin story of Star Wars' coolest character (other than R2-D2, who is the bomb). We'll find out what a young Chewbacca looked like – probably quite a lot like the grown-up Chewbacca. Then, in June, The 'Merc with a Mouth' returns in **DEADPOOL 2**, bringing more fourth wall-breaking, super-sweary ultra-violence, as well as introducing time-travelling super-soldier Cable.

In excellent news, June will also reunite one of the greatest combinations in cinema history: Jeff Goldblum and dinosaurs. He returns as smouldering maths bloke Ian Malcolm in **JURASSIC WORLD: FALLEN KINGDOM**, which sees the dinosaurs threatened by a volcano and some sort of super-secret conspiracy. And as if that wasn't enough for the year, there are rumours of a long-in-the-works **MATRIX** sequel finally seeing the light of day, with The Wire's Michael B. Jordan strapping on the rad shades to lean backwards while looking impossibly-cool.

PANIC! STATIONS

TAKING OFF his Kinky Boots after a stint on Broadway, it's time for Brendon Urie to get back to Panic! At The Disco. So what exactly do we know about Las Vegas' most showbiz's sixth album? Not much, in fairness. Brendon has described the new material as "a little bizarre" and "heavy on the vocals." Given his flamboyant 2017, we'd be let down by anything less.

GETTY

AGAINST THE CURRENT
GET BACK IN THE FLOW

OTHER THAN contributing a song to the game League Of Legends, it's been a while since ATC gave us anything new. As we head into 2018, though, Chrissy Costanza and the lads will get busy on a new full-length.

BEHEMOTH
RISE FROM THE SHADOWS

CAN POLISH black metal nightmares Behemoth's 11th album raise the impossibly lofty bar set by 2012's The Satanist, an album fuelled by frontman Nergal's cancer battle (and, indeed, victory)? Judging by the sample riffs he's put on his Instagram, it's almost guaranteed.

PARKWAY DRIVE
GET READY TO BLOW

LAID-BACK SURF dudes they may be, but Parkway Drive take their creative process very seriously. When it came to the follow-up to 2015's globe-battering Ire, the Aussie metalcore monsters had no hesitation about sacrificing a huge chunk of 2017. "This was the first time in the band's career that we saw the potential to create something bigger than we've done so far," explains frontman Winston McCall. "Everything we're doing now is stepping towards that goal. There's a longer-term plan in place for what we want to achieve. For better or worse, it takes a long time to craft our music." So what'll it sound like when it's finally out? "It's a mix of directions, themes and sounds that become Parkway as you know it, but never would've expected!"

HALESTORM BLOW BACK IN

GIVEN THE sheer bombastic brilliance of 2015's Into The Wild Life, Halestorm can be forgiven for taking their time to ride the wave. Already announced for June's Ramblin' Man Fair in Kent, they won't be stopping any time soon. But can we expect them to be airing some new material along the way? G'wan Lzzy, give us a few new tunes!

STONE TEMPLE PILOTS FLY BACK

FOLLOWING THE tragic passings of Scott Weiland and Chester Bennington, it looked like the end for STP. However, they've found hope in X-Factor contestant Jeff Gutt, whose vocals on supercharged new track Meadow are superb. We eagerly await their hotly-anticipated seventh LP.

GHOST SCARE UP ALBUM NUMBER FOUR

WHEN GHOST bade farewell to Papa Emeritus III in Gothenburg at the end of September, and welcomed in his creaky-looking potential successor, Papa Emeritus Zero, there was a sense of definite rebirth. "The party is over," the 'new' singer warned. "The middle ages begin now!" Well, not *now*, in summer when the new album's due.

MAIDEN EXPLORE THE LEGACY OF THE BEAST

WE JUST had an album tour for The Book Of Souls last summer, so now we get a bit of a look through Maiden history at July's shows. And with Killswitch Engage on board as support, it's hard to imagine a more complete heavy metal package. Come on, lads, we've been requesting Quest For Fire for years – add it to the set!

NINE INCH NAILS
DO THE TREBLE

LAST YEAR'S excellent Add Violence was the second in a trilogy of EPs from Trent Reznor. Expect the final part to drop this year, and for it to be just as twisted and brilliant as what came before it. And then, with that all completed, Trent will have a bit of free time on his hands. It'd make much more sense to take his new works on the road than just sitting around watching Netflix, wouldn't it?

PEARL JAM RETURN!

PEARL JAM are untouchable at this point. It'll have been four long years since the Seattle grunge masters last played a note on UK soil when they take the stage for their two nights at London's O2 Arena on June 18 and 19. It will also be worth the wait.

QOTSA TAKE OVER FINSBURY PARK

QUEENS OF The Stone Age are massive right now. In keeping, the desert-rock Villains' return to the UK on Saturday June 30 should be the feel-good hit of the summer. They've already announced support from hip-hop supergroup Run The Jewels, Swedish rockers The Hives and The Godfather of punk himself, Iggy Pop, which is all awesome.

RIPPLINGS OF REAL FRIENDS' RETURN

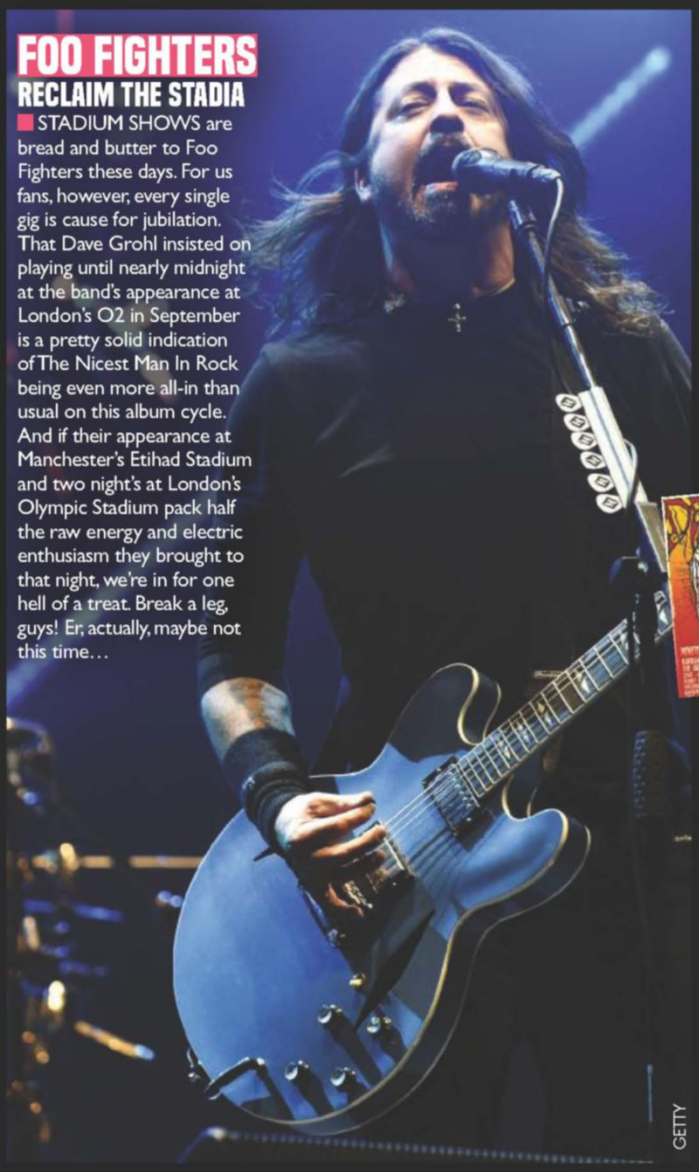
ILLINOIS POP-PUNKS Real Friends seem to have been hiding under the radar, of late. Last album The Home Inside My Head still has jaws on the floor almost two years since its May 2016 release. And although the follow-up isn't even announced yet, we'd bet our beating hearts we'll have ears on it well within the next 12 months.

STONE SOUR
KEEP ON ROLLING

"IF SLIPKNOT is the hangover," Corey Taylor explained to K! at the end of 2017, "Stone Sour is the party!" Picking up where December's mammoth UK run left off, the Iowan metallers will keep the party going in June, taking a break from the European festival main stages for three relatively intimate shows at Manchester Apollo, London Roundhouse and Nottingham Rock City. Expect a gleeful mixture of stomping riffage, anthemic sing-alongs and wacky inflatable tube men. No, really…

FOO FIGHTERS
RECLAIM THE STADIA

STADIUM SHOWS are bread and butter to Foo Fighters these days. For us fans, however, every single gig is cause for jubilation. That Dave Grohl insisted on playing until nearly midnight at the band's appearance at London's O2 in September is a pretty solid indication of The Nicest Man In Rock being even more all-in than usual on this album cycle. And if their appearance at Manchester's Etihad Stadium and two night's at London's Olympic Stadium pack half the raw energy and electric enthusiasm they brought to that night, we're in for one hell of a treat. Break a leg, guys! Er, actually, maybe not this time…



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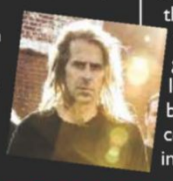
KILLSWITCH ENGAGE REV UP THEIR RETURN

IT FEELS like time for the Massachusetts metalcore icons to drive forward. Evidently, that's just what they plan to do. Having announced way back in August that they've started to demo new material, we can expect album eight soon. Just in time for that Maiden tour, hopefully…

FRESH RUMBLINGS FROM LAMB OF GOD?

RANDY BLYTHE commented in early 2017 that the end of touring in support of 2015's VII: Sturm und Drang would herald the beginning of some real time off for Lamb Of God. He hasn't disappeared, however, popping up on Body Count's Bloodlust album among others. Could that mean 2018 is when they start work on a new record? Dunno, but here's hoping.



LED ZEPPELIN
HIT THE BIG 5-0

BAND BIRTHDAYS aren't normally a big deal. Especially when said band aren't even together when they come around. When it comes to Led Zeppelin's 50th, however, there's something to be said for celebrating the progenitors of heavy music as we know it today. Legendary guitarist Jimmy Page has said a load of unreleased material will be coming out as part of the celebrations, which are also said to include several "high-profile" events.

WITHIN TEMPTATION PLOT THEIR GRAND RETURN

WITHIN TEMPTATION songstress Sharon den Adel was worn-out at the end of the Dutch giants' last tour. Two years off and a solo record (My Indigo), however, have re-ignited her hunger for "epic, heavy music". 2018 will see that hunger sated with a seventh studio album and autumn shows that'll bring an end to the symphonic metallers' longest-ever tour hiatus. It'll be grand, trust us.

THE FEST IN TOWN

ALL THE BEST PLACES TO WATCH LOADS OF BANDS IN ONE GO!

IF IT'S a year, it means there's festivals. And there's loads this year. So many, in fact, that the season starts off in April, with the always-awesome **ROADBURN** in The Netherlands, featuring a day curated by Converge's Jacob Bannon. Closer to home, but equally heavy, **DESERTFEST** takes over Camden once again in May. In the same month, **SLAM DUNK** will deliver another awesome line-up, with Good Charlotte and Jimmy Eat World topping a bill featuring PVRIS, Every Time I Die, Thursday and loads more. And but a few weeks later, in June, there's **DOWNLOAD**, headlined by Guns N' Roses, Ozzy and Avenged Sevenfold. "Whenever I'd get bootleg videos of Iron Maiden and all the bands that I grew up listening to, it was always from there," reveals A7X's M. Shadows. "Donington was always an important thing for metal, because it reached outside the country. It reaches to the United States, it has a worldwide reach. It's very special." Damn right. And if Guns and Ozzy have you in the mood for classic rock, head to **RAMBLIN' MAN FAIR** for Halestorm and Blackberry Smoke.

If you're feeling flush, you could go to America for the final **WARPED TOUR**. The internet's already put a load of Bitcoins on My Chemical Romance reforming for it – who knows?! Also for those who want to go away you could go and see Maiden at **HELLFEST** in France, alongside 150-odd bands of varying degrees of heaviness. Or how about **GRASPOP** in Belgium, or **BE PROG! MY FRIEND** in Portugal? Then there's **WACKEN** in Germany for metal.

We're still waiting on **READING & LEEDS** to stop playing their cards so bloody close to their chests and announce August's line-up! In fact, both **ARCTANGENT** and **2000TREES** need to follow suit, although given that last year's instalments of both were awesome, we should be in for heavy treats. Talking of which, Judas Priest are finally headlining **BLOODSTOCK** in August. And the end of summer needn't mean no fests, as November sees Leeds coming over all heavy for **DAMNATION**. Right, get out there!

THE DEVIL HAS ALL THE BEST BOOZE

THERE'S A LOT OF MYSTERY AROUND SWEDISH BLACK METAL TERRORS **WATAIN**. HOW TO GET CLOSE TO THE TRUTH ABOUT THEM? GO FOR A NIGHT ON THE TILES WITH LEADER **ERIK DANIELSSON** AND GET HIM TO EXPLAIN THE SECRETS OF HIS BAND'S BLACK ART...

WORDS: NICK RUSKELL **PHOTOS:** ANDY FORD

"I don't accept the laws of society. I'm going to find my own..."

A Monday night, Soho. On a street lined with sex shops, seedy doorways and sketchy-looking characters sits a tiny watering hole. Through the bar, down the narrow stairs into its cellar, away from too many eyes, is a small cubbyhole decorated with an enormous pentagram. It is here we find Erik Danielsson, lit by half a dozen candles, swigging from a bottle of Motörhead beer.

The objective of the evening is a simple one: have rather a lot to drink with Watain's talismanic frontman and allow the conversation to flow wherever it may. And, with its long history as a bohemian home to artists, musicians, writers, prostitutes, drunkards and folk who prefer to live their lives outside of the usual constraints of normal society, Soho seems an appropriate locale in which to undertake an evening of hellraising with this particular child of Satan.

"Often when on tour we're drawn to these kinds of areas," he says, examining his surroundings. "It's often where the shows happen, or where people take us if they're stupid enough to take us out."

Watain's, and indeed Erik's, reputations precede them. Ever since they first made their entrance into the black metal underground in 1998, as teenagers from the small town of Uppsala, Sweden, there's been an aura about them that's firmly demarked them from other bands. Their dedication to Satanism was a lot more serious than that of many of their contemporaries, with live shows acting more as rituals involving blood, candles and incantations, and the band have always conducted themselves in a manner that's never allowed outsiders to get too close. From their roots, to their uncompromising new album Trident Wolf Eclipse, they've had something about them that hints at very private, esoteric things lurking in their shadow. Over the next couple of hours, as booze causes tongues to loosen, Erik will explain how the philosophy of his band runs to much, much more than creating music.

"I suppose it's the same as if someone discovered motorcycle culture at a young age, and they experiment and find how much fun it is to ride," muses the singer. "But after 20 years, it becomes something more – it becomes a lifestyle. Watain is the same. We are not going to accept the laws and orders of our society – we're going to find out for ourselves, in our group of people, and then we're going to abide to that. We want to let the things that inspire us lead the way, instead of things that are authoritative."

Bartender, more booze! The night is going to get interesting. And, quite likely, messy…

When you meet Erik, you quickly realise you're not in the company of a fool. Where black metal is often stereotyped as the work of folk who are, at best, simply not as clever as they think they are, and at the lowest point, gormless losers playing with inverted crosses, Erik is in another realm entirely. Fiercely intelligent, and with an iron will that suggests you fuck with him and his circle at your peril, he immediately stands out as an ambitious man and an articulate, deep thinker. But he's not a simple bar-room philosopher. Those people talk more than they act. Erik is someone who has his own very well-developed personal code, and lives his entire life by it, come what may.

"There are some things where it's like saying, 'Yeah, I like metal, so I became a metalhead,'" he explains. "Okay, what does that mean? You buy a lot of records and read a lot of metal magazines and go to shows? Great. But for us, that was never enough. For us it was a matter of fundamental decisions about life, about how to relate to the values of society."

Does that make life as hard as it makes it liberating?

"It makes it far more liberating and enjoyable than it makes it hard," Erik replies. "I am looking for things that empower me and make me connect with great forces that are at work, not the things that suck my energy out and drag me down. I never think about those things."

But surely the life of the outlaw, the pirate, is by its nature a rocky path?

"But of course, there is a price for everything," he nods. "There is a lot of cause and effect for every choice you make in your life. If you decided, 'I'm not going to make anyone else's money – if I make money, it's going to be my own,' it sounds like an easy idea, but it isn't. It presents a lot of situations where you really have to grow up fast and realise this is about strong decision making. This is a hardcore fucking concept – it's not about loose ideas. You cannot fool around with these kinds of things."

Intrinsically, this is related to rebellion. But that's where Erik pulls the rug out from under you, and not just because you're five drinks in and your IQ is starting to drop. For here we get to the very nub of Watain: it's not about hating what's outside, but protecting and revelling in the precious, sacred things that lie within.

"Sure, it has to do with rebellion," Erik agrees, "But the reason for that rebellion is not just to rebel. It's not about the need to revolt, it's not based upon hatred of any specific thing. It comes from having something in your life to which you relate in a humble, respectful, loving, worshipping way, right? When you have a thing like that and you're doing everything you can to maintain it, uphold it, defend it, then opposition comes in. Then there is rebellion against authority that wants to take that thing and crush it to pieces.

"That's a very important insight a lot of people miss about Watain," he continues with a sigh. "This has nothing to do with a random eagerness to mess with people. I don't give a fuck about people. They can do what the fuck they want, as long as they don't stand in our way."

And what if they do?

"Well, people like to talk more than they like to act," he grins. "These people who like to talk – 'haters' as I believe they are called in modern society – they are like insects. They chirp all day, but when you walk by they shut the fuck up. There are a lot of shit-talkers, and very few people that confront us in person."

He picks up his lighter and heads outside for a fag, chuckling as he goes.

"It makes me a bit sad sometimes," he grins. "Why can't we have people to fight?!"

Empty bottles are replaced with full ones, and talk turns to indulgence, and how deeply such experiences can impact one's life, for the better. Lemmy once said that "acid made me a better person". Erik is of a similar opinion. But also that these things are not for everyone.

"When people have a radical experience that is a positive, empowering force to be remembered with an uplifting sense, like taking acid, hearing your first Mötorhead album, smoking your first spliff or doing your first line of coke, getting into a fight for the first time, it affects you," he begins. "If you do that once, twice, three times, and you decide to change your life in accordance with it because it was such a positive, transforming experience, then great! But the majority, I would say, back away."

But you don't?

"No," he says, shaking his head. "There is a saying from the biker community that I think is very relevant. Not to claim it as our own in any way, but it's the biker idea of 'the one per cent'. I think this idea applies so well in a metal context as well. Some people hang around the side, but some people go all the fucking way in and have life altering experiences as the one per cent of heavy metal who adopt this kind of lifestyle."

In print, in the cold, sober light of day, Erik's words could read as being filled with darkness. And while there's plenty of that in his life and music, and he takes both very seriously ("I can't relate to people who joke about their art," he sighs at one point), Erik is also very good company and an incredibly easy to like man, a music fanatic as happy to chat about Iron Maiden and obscure '80s goth bands as he is life, the universe and everything else. He's also – and this is something he agrees often gets missed about him and his band – an incredibly positive, forward-looking person once you look at him and his philosophies the right way. He chuckles when we say he seems like a big fan of wine, women and song ("Of course – how the fuck else would you keep on without them?"), but when it's suggested his attitude is similar to Judas Priest's Rob Halford – a man who seemingly refuses to allow any kind of bleakness or misery to gain a foothold his life – he immediately agrees.

"Yes, because Rob Halford has always had something to live and die for," he enthuses. "He made his life using artistic expression. He's got that to live for, and of course he's not going to be a miserable guy. I have Watain. It is the statue of my life, the force that makes my life worth living.

"For me it comes down to such a simple thing," Erik says in closing, as last orders are called and we head into the night to see where it takes us. "Are you able to look yourself in the mirror every day? Are you doing what you want to do? What can you do more? What do you want? That's what's most important to me."

TRIDENT WOLF ECLIPSE IS OUT ON JANUARY 5 VIA CENTURY MEDIA. THE BAND PLAY LONDON DOME ON JANUARY 12 – SEE THE GIG GUIDE

Our gag about turning Watain into wine went down well, then…

THE UNHOLY TRINITY

THERE ARE THREE VERY IMPORTANT BANDS IN WATAIN'S WORLD. LET ERIK INTRODUCE YOU…

MOTÖRHEAD

"I think Mötorhead summarises a big part of Watain that has to do with pure fucking rock'n'roll mayhem, in the truest sense of the word. Fighting and fucking and doing stupid things. I mention that because I think they are the best band to sum that part of Watain up. It's important!"

DISSECTION

"We learned so much from them. We learned how you deal with your surroundings if you didn't want to be a sheep; how to push against the world if you didn't want to be a slave to everyone. They taught us about conviction, to not joke away what you're doing, but to be able to stand up for everything that you do."

BATHORY

"Bathory was the band we met around – Pelle [Forsberg, guitar] had the goat logo painted on his jacket. Quorthon [Bathory mainman] passed away in 2004, and in 2010 we did a set of his songs at Sweden Rock. His family was there, and his father got up and made a speech before we played. It was one of the most powerful moments I have ever had onstage."

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Will Gould's stack-heels: massive

A 'pointed' performance from James Scythe in Creeper's production

Can't Swim's Chris LoPorto: the face he pulls if you ask him if he can swim

Ian Miles didn't heed advice about what happens when the wind changes

CREEPER

PLUS: CAN'T SWIM, MICROWAVE, NERVUS

O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON. 07.12.17

KKKK

THE THEATRE OF FEAR ROLLS INTO LONDON TOWN AS THE SOUTHAMPTON HORROR-PUNKS CAP A TRIUMPHANT YEAR IN STYLE

WORDS: DAVID McLAUGHLIN **PHOTOS:** PAUL HARRIES

Will Gould or Gerard Way? You decide…

STAR SHOUT!

WILL GOULD

CREEPER, VOCALS

TELL US ABOUT THE THEATRE OF FEAR AND HOW IT CAME TO BE…

"Like everything Creeper does, it's richly detailed. The seeds of this were sown amongst our core fanbase online. The idea is you're seeing the anniversary tour of the World's Fair, but it's interrupted by the characters from our narrative. It's the most expensive show I've ever been a part of!"

HAS IT ALL BEEN WORTH IT, THOUGH?

"Absolutely! Especially in the current climate, not just globally, but in our world and our scene over the past few months. I think everyone needs an escape from everything, so I'm really glad that this can be that for people."

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO PUT TOGETHER A SHOW THAT'S INFORMED BY MYTHOLOGY THE FANS CREATED, WHEN THAT WAS YOUR THING FROM THE START?

"It's life imitating art. There really is a gang of kids walking around with Callous Heart patches on in Southampton now. Honestly, I feel like the world's going through a really dark time at the moment, so I'm as grateful for this as anyone else. I'm so pleased to be a part of Creeper. Personally, Creeper has been a complete crutch for me. It's been an outrageous year for us as a band; we've achieved so much and far more than I could have ever dreamed."

ON THE Tubes, buses and walkways on the approach to the venue it's clear a mob has descended upon Shepherd's Bush. The proliferation of Callous Heart back-patches on every corner says everything about how other bands fare tonight. This is all about Creeper, which is a shame because all three support acts bring back-to-back excellence in their own individual ways.

It's sadly a touch too soon after doors for the spindly indie-punk of Nervus to register much beyond ambivalence, and though special praise is due for the heart-on-sleeve catharsis of Microwave's tune Stovall, they're equally under-appreciated. The jagged punk anguish of Can't Swim goes down a little better, but the subtleties of the opening trio's offerings generally pale in comparison with the melodramatic bombast that follows.

From the off, pomp and ceremony dominate Creeper's set, thanks to an introductory monologue courtesy of mysterious narrator James Scythe, warning of The Stranger's imminent arrival. *Who*? The *what*? It's all very unapologetically involved and wonderfully bold from Southampton's finest, but those who are in are *all the way* in, if the screams that greet every utterance are any indicator. What Creeper have created with Eternity, In Your Arms is a concept that reaches for the ambition of My Chemical Romance's The Black Parade. What's more, this tour's Theatre Of Fear theme is inspired by the six-piece's most enterprising fans. All this while Creeper are essentially still a punk band touring their debut album.

Admirable as the grandiose vision is, budget limitations mean it's not yet as immersive as it might be. So we get that melodramatic opening, a Southampton World's Fair '67 drape, and a giant Stranger mask that acts as the backdrop throughout. You imagine that, given the resources and the time, Creeper's onstage vision could be as immense as the one in their heads.

The music is impactful enough on its own, however, and its connection with those fans who've bought into this gang wholesale is shown in the outpouring of love and energy onstage and off. The set list ebbs and flows exquisitely, flitting with skill and poise between the wild punk rattle of Honeymoon Suite, the death wish romance of Suzanne, and the stripped-down heartbreak of Crickets. None of which comes close to the supreme Misery, as the quivering ache in frontman Will Gould's voice virtually goads the masses into becoming one giant, blubbering mess of emotion. It's a crowning achievement on a richly-deserved victory lap around the country celebrating the impression Eternity, In Your Arms has left on the wider Creeper cult.

It's been clear for a while now, but there's something special about this band, and they're still only figuring it all out as they go and grow. On nights like this, it's a joy to bear witness to.

No member of Creeper washed their hands after playing with glue

Despite Johnny Depp's protestations, Manson still wanted to play Captain Jack Sparrow's parrot

MARILYN MANSON

SSE ARENA, WEMBLEY, LONDON. 09.12.17

KKKK

BROKEN BUT UNBOWED, MANSON TURNS LONDON UPSIDE DOWN

WORDS: JAMES HICKIE **PHOTO:** JENN FIVE

"I MAY be slightly crippled," sneers Marilyn Manson, "but that doesn't mean we're not going to have a show here tonight." He's referring, of course, to the fact he's sporting a medical boot, after a stage prop crushed him during a gig in New York in September; another unexpected twist in a topsy-turvy year encompassing highs (the critical acclaim that greeted 10th album Heaven Upside Down) and lows (the discreet firing of bandmate/friend Jeordie White aka Twiggy Ramirez following historic allegations of sexual assault). He's not wrong about putting on a show, though, even if it's a scrappy affair – albeit enjoyably so.

Despite the arena setting and the shock rocker's predilection for the grandiose, the production is minimal, still featuring the offending giant pistols that, upon collapsing on the 48-year-old, broke his right leg in two places. You can't say the God of Fuck isn't adaptable, though. He embraces his decrepitude, incorporating it into a variety of theatrical guises. As feral opener Revelation #12 paints Wembley red, he appears in an electric wheelchair-cum-vertical stretcher that makes him look like a mad professor's creation being unveiled to the world. During Disposable Teens his right leg is bent, a black 'peg' taking the strain between knee and stage, and giving him the appearance of a goth pirate king, as figures dressed in scrubs stand by to assist him.

Speaking of pirates, when it comes to gimmicks, you'd think that few that could be more impactful than bringing out "very-not-lover-but-not-brother", Jack Sparrow himself, Johnny Depp. Seemingly the special guest du jour for ageing rockers, the Hollywood star makes not one but two appearances, adding languid guitar to The Dope Show and a grotty version of The Beautiful People – though they miss a trick by not playing *Depp* Six. Despite this cameo's headline-grabbing clout, and the audience's audible glee, it's a love-in that doesn't really add much to the overall show.

More effective is SAY10 – the gory promo video for which featured Mr. Depp – with its hissed verses and boiling chorus tonight accompanied by deep blue lights bathing the stage. It's simple but very effective, much like set-closer The Nobodies, which has recently been reprised after a 10-year absence, and is stripped to just vocals, plus guitar courtesy of Manson's creative cohort Tyler Bates, for the majority of its running time. It sees the God of Fuck stood in an oversized hood, a spotlight illuminating him from above as snow descends from the roof.

It's not just a slightly sinister concession to the time of year, but a reminder that Manson remains an accomplished aesthete, with a keen eye for striking imagery. Thankfully for us, it just so happens he writes some amazing songs, too.

NOTHING MORE
CATHOUSE, GLASGOW. 09.12.17

KKKK

GRAMMY-NOMINATED TEXAN ALT.ROCKERS FLEX THEIR MUSCLES IN GLASGOW

THERE'S AN absurdity about Nothing More this evening. Don't get us wrong, the marauding Texans – blazing in off a triumphant 2017, having received two GRAMMY nominations – absolutely own Glasgow's 330-cap Cathouse. But this is a band built for arenas. Frontman Jonny Hawkins (barefoot, shirtless, ripped to shreds) prowls the space like an alt.rock Tarzan. All incendiary vocals and rippling sinew, in another life he could've been a stand-alone superstar. It's to our banging benefit, then, that he's taken the rockier, more progressive path. From the moment a ripping intro-tape (Zack de la Rocha's Digging For Windows) detonates into the manic industrial rock of Christ Copyright, their intent is overwhelming. "We've come a long way to be with you again," grins Jonny from behind a faux-biomechanical mic-stand H.R. Giger would've approved. In the djent-inflected crunch of Let 'Em Burn, the molten bass of Don't Stop, and mega-anthem Go To War's lung-busting battle cry – dropped, almost nonchalantly, mid-set – they've packed the heavyweight luggage to make the mileage worthwhile. They're songs delivered with machine-tooled slickness and rattling volume, though they're occasionally slowed by down by the weight of their own earnestness. "Encores are fake!" preaches Jonny, waving goodnight without a hint of humour. "There's no pretend here!" As flaming closer Salem (Burn The Witch) sears through, however, there are enough fists in the air and jaws on the floor to confirm that po-faced formula seriously hits the spot.

SAM LAW

REIGNING DAYS
OLD BLUE LAST, LONDON. 05.12.17

KKKK

ONE OF THE UK'S FASTEST-RISING BANDS GIVE US A TASTE OF NEXT YEAR'S FIRST FULL-LENGTH

HAVING EARNED themselves a deal with the newly-launched Marshall Records back in March, and currently putting the finishing touches to their full-length debut, Devonshire trio Reigning Days are gearing up for the biggest year of their career so far. Luckily, the band showcasing new tunes tonight look and sound like they're more than ready to conquer the world, hammering out the kind of choruses that turned Royal Blood into chart-topping heroes in what felt like no time at all. "There's not a lot to say other than get drunk and enjoy yourselves," grins singer/guitarist Dan Steer, whose voice blending with that of bassist Jonny Finnis – along with some clever amp trickery also reminiscent of Royal Blood – gives Empire, Gravity and Crazy Horse layers and volume beyond what a three-piece would ordinarily be able to achieve. New tracks including Do You Feel? hold up to expectation and bode well for things to come, while live favourites Thrones and Friendly Fire manage to sound more deafening than ever. "It's cold and a school night, you could've stayed in to get laid – so thanks for being here and we'll be seeing you next year," winks Dan before the brain-burning grunge of closer Renegade. If Reigning Days are looking to be the loudest trio straight outta Devon since the mighty Muse, they can rest assured that, on form like this, they're well on course.

AMIT SHARMA

MASTODON
PLUS: RED FANG, RUSSIAN CIRCLES
CIVIC HALL, WOLVERHAMPTON. 04.12.17

KKKK

A QUIET NIGHT GETS OBLITERATED BY SLUDGE METAL SUPERHEROES

WORDS: STEVE BEEBEE **PHOTOS:** GOBINDER JHITTA

THERE'S THE world that you and I live in, and then there's another place inhabited only by Mastodon. Each gig by the Atlanta behemoth is an exercise in cosmic heaviness, removed from normality and spinning into black holes of power.

Their decision tonight to open with The Last Baron, a 13-minute epic from 2009's Crack The Skye, shows exactly how little Mastodon care for convention. Only watchful guitarist Bill Kelliher seems remotely in tune with his surroundings – the rest are tripping out on the galactic sounds with the rest of us.

Openers Russian Circles are of similar mindset, but without vocals are harder to follow. Red Fang are much more appetising. Their hilarious promo videos portray them as a comedic version of the headliners, but in the flesh they're heavy-riffed and in no mood for frippery.

Mastodon are nevertheless the perfect band to follow them, and their 17-song set drifts capably between all seven of their albums. Divinations and Oblivion remain dizzying aural feasts, but newer material like Show Yourself (sung by multi-talented drummer Brann Dailor) and Steambreather receive even warmer receptions. Bill and Brent Hinds' extraordinary playing on the galloping slice of bonkers that is Bladecatcher is an apt contrast to the more routinely structured material from last album Emperor Of Sand, but when it comes to Mastodon, expectations should be left in the cloakroom.

In theory, this might have been a difficult gig for them. It's one of the larger venues on the tour, and while the turnout is respectable it's a long way from packed. It troubles them not – Mastodon operate in a dimension that isn't entirely earthbound. Instead they soak all those that are here with replenishing torrents of alien volume, before moving on to the next galaxy.

STAR SHOUT!
BILL KELLIHER
MASTODON, GUITAR

HOW DID THIS ONE LOOK FROM THE STAGE?
"Tonight started off kind of slow, but in the end it was really good. Both Russian Circles and Red Fang had told us that it wasn't really their kind of show. They said it was more of a Mastodon crowd. We went out there and it wasn't totally great at first, but it did pick up. We played really tight – we've been touring for a while and we're really at our peak and into our groove right now."

WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST THING THAT HAPPENED?
"Right in front of me was an old woman – she must have been in her late-70s. She was wearing old granny glasses and a Christmas sweater. Her husband or partner was behind her, holding on to the barrier, protecting her. He looked the same age. They must be the oldest Mastodon fans I've ever seen. It's definitely a memory I'll take away from this evening."

Brent Hinds couldn't help laughing at his own jokes

Bill Kelliher was never bored with fret boards

Never mind the music, Troy Sanders' bass was properly heavy

REVIEWS

KKKKK = CLASSIC
KKKK = EXCELLENT
KKK = GOOD
KK = AVERAGE
K = POOR

TONIGHT ALIVE

UNDERWORLD *(HOPELESS)*

KKK

SYDNEY GANG RESET AND REFOCUS IN SEARCH OF A SOUND THEY CAN CALL THEIR OWN

IN A sea of soundalikes happy to play it safe, it's important to celebrate bands willing to take risks – even if the gamble doesn't always pay off. From an outside perspective, that's what seemed to happen when Tonight Alive reinvented themselves for their 2016 album, Limitless. But in retrospect the problem wasn't so much the risk involved as it was the compromises made, the result of a recording experience reportedly beset by outside influences leaving grubby paw prints on the project.

If anything, Limitless fell short by ceding the creative direction of the band's bold new vision. Perhaps Tonight Alive didn't go far quite enough? This time, on fourth album Underworld, the Sydney crew faced a whole new challenge. Although it remained unclear and unspoken until the album's completion, it would be their last with founding member Whakaio Taahi, after the guitarist called time on his nine years with the band last October. For this record, the Aussie rockers trusted their gut instincts in the creative process. The result is an intriguing snapshot of a band eschewing the world's expectations once and for all, and coming into their own.

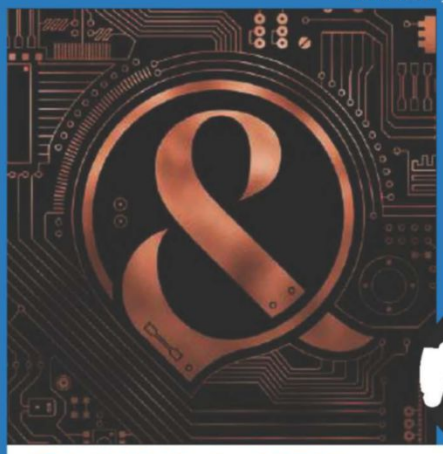
That plays out in a naturalistic marriage of old and new Tonight Alive on opener Book Of Love, anchoring its sound in the fizzing energy and passion of their youth, combined with the percussive, widescreen scope of recent times. '*I'm intoxicated by my depression,*' Jenna McDougall sings with typical candour as lead single Temple jolts into life, while upping the electronic flourishes and hanging onto the melodic rock vibes that made them such a force in the first place. Right off the bat Underworld has the feel of a storming return to form, and the floaty, understated elegance of Disappear (featuring PVRIS vocalist Lynn Gunn) confirms that impression.

Yet they aren't all direct hits, alas. Occasionally one song simply bleeds into another, and the back-to-back schmaltz of Looking For Heaven and My Underworld (complete with Corey Taylor popping up for a raspy duet midway) makes for a limp closing combo.

On the whole, however, Underworld bears the mark of a band redefining who they are and putting themselves back on steady footing after a wobble. The most positive aspect is that it offers a freedom to explore wherever they please going forward. For now, that's achievement enough.

DOWNLOAD: Disappear, For You.
FOR FANS OF: All Time Low, PVRIS, Sainte.
DAVID McLAUGHLIN

"THE ONLY APPROACH I HAD TO THIS RECORD WAS TO UNLEASH..."
JENNA McDOUGALL



TRACK BY TRACK

OF MICE & MEN

DEFY *(RISE)*

KKKK

OM&M BOLDLY FORGE ONWARD WITHOUT AUSTIN CARLILE, AND DELIVER THEIR FINEST HOUR

1 DEFY
This is an album that might never have happened. When Austin Carlile stepped down due to his ongoing battle with Marfan Syndrome, bassist Aaron Pauley stepped up, taking over lead vocals and providing OM&M with a way to continue. Defy both slays and sets the tone, inviting the world to come at them.

2 INSTINCTS
There's a high-end buzzing like angry hornets, but mostly this rides an almost Lamb Of God-style groove.

3 BACK TO ME
This has more of an alt. radio rock vibe with a touch of Linkin Park. They haven't gone back to doing slamming metal exclusively, then.

4 SUNFLOWER
Sunflower delivers more evidence that this will be a reasonably diverse offering, with a prog-tinted churn and no breakdown in earshot.

5 UNBREAKABLE
This one does have a breakdown, but overall retains the taut modern rock rather than metalcore feel, as Aaron trades the cleans and screams with himself.

6 VERTIGO
Vertigo goes even further, starting on a classic rock kick before sliding into some trippier swirls.

7 MONEY
There's dirty distortion, a warped solo and a great stomping groove. That, Avenged Sevenfold, is how to inject your own personality into a Pink Floyd cover.

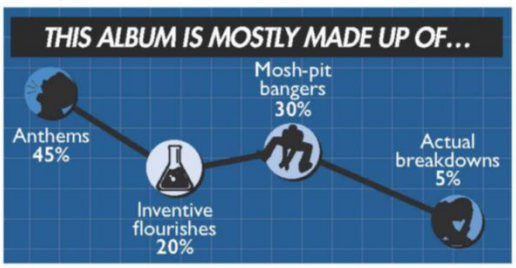
8 HOW WILL YOU LIVE
There's an on-off chunky riff, a rolling sense of momentum, and a big sing-along chorus with a splintered edge. Nice.

9 ON THE INSIDE
The vocoder vocals aren't a great start, but it gets better as towering, crystalline melodies are brought into the mix.

10 WARZONE
Fans: 'I guess they won't do pit wreckers now.' Aaron: 'Hold my pint!' The bass rumbles like a tank, the guitar thrashes, and the vocals build to an unhinged climax.

11 FOREVER YDG'N
This is the (deliberate) throwback song with a big breakdown-heavy trip down metalcore memory lane.

12 IF WE WERE GHOSTS
A haunting song inspired by Chester Bennington's death. In part, this album has resumed a heavier, more raw stance than Cold World, while retaining the sense of adventure.



WORDS: PAUL TRAVERS

THE INSIDER
JENNA McDOUGALL
(VOCALS)

NOW YOU'VE HAD TIME TO REFLECT ON IT, HOW WAS THE EXPERIENCE OF MAKING UNDERWORLD?
"Recording in Thailand with [producer] Dave Petrovic was incredible. But it's been a transitional time. There was this strange atmosphere of unknowing. There was a lot of unspoken fear, unrest and uncertainty. The album has been a natural evolution for us, it came from us, and we can really back what we're doing. I feel connected to it and I think it's our best work."

WAS IT A TOUGH ALBUM TO WRITE, LYRICALLY?
"The only approach I had to this record was to unleash: to fully express who I am and how I feel, as honestly as I could. I'd tried to protect myself and remain as private as possible for a long time, but that never got me anywhere, so I've told the truth on this record."

TELL US ABOUT THOSE GUEST VOCALS...
"We're so not a band that has guest vocalists and I'm responsible for that, because I don't like my story to be told through someone else's voice. But it just felt right to start sharing our music. Lynn and I have been friends since 2014, and Corey came into the picture through Twitter! We connected online really authentically, and I reached out after we finished recording. He wrote back within minutes and he was super into the idea of adding his voice."

REVIEWS

KKKKK = CLASSIC KKKK = EXCELLENT KKK = GOOD KK = AVERAGE K = POOR

AVATAR
AVATAR COUNTRY (CENTURY MEDIA)

KKK

MARBLES CONTINUE TO ELUDE MONARCH-FIXATED SWEDISH METALLERS

HAVING NURTURED all manner of bizarre concepts, Avatar have outdone themselves on this seventh slab of silliness. This time they're on about a king who saves the world with metal. The word 'king' appears in every song title, and guitarist Jonas Jarlsby portrays the sovereign in question. The metal, when it comes, is decent. There's duelling guitars and epic song structures, one oddly entertaining trip into country metal, and solid stompers like King's Harvest and King After King. Sadly, the album's diversions include a ludicrous spoken-word piece about the state of the monarch's moustache determining the early arrival of spring. Uh, thanks…?

DOWNLOAD: A Statue Of The King.
FOR FANS OF: In Flames, Volbeat.
STEVE BEEBEE

GIANTS IN THE TREES
GIANTS IN THE TREES (SELF-RELEASE)

KKKK

FORMER NIRVANA BASSIST AND PALS UNLEASH TROUBLE IN THE FOREST

"WE LOVE to play music. We like to grow food," declare Giants In The Trees on Facebook. The agrarian Wahkiakum quartet of Krist Novoselic, Jillian Raye (vocals, banjo), Ray Prestagard (guitar, harmica) and Erik Friend (drums) are all Grangers – meaning that they all belong to arcane rural collectives that help maintain their farming communities. So far, so good, so serious…. Or at least it would be if the four-piece weren't blessed with a unique sense of playfulness. Musically speaking, theirs is a marriage of '60s-inspired, progressive psych-folk and sly pop hooks. Krist's elephantine bass undertow is in full effect on deep-grooving first single Sasquatch, but it's singer Jillian's distinct ability to shape melodies that defines this wondrously beguiling 12-track, digital-only effort. She shines brightest on Pretend, a bona fide rock anthem enhanced by Jack Endino's intimate production that confirms that Giants do indeed make local music for a truly global audience.

DOWNLOAD: Pretend.
FOR FANS OF: Nirvana, Purson.
PHIL ALEXANDER

ORPHANED LAND
UNSUNG PROPHETS AND DEAD MESSIAHS (CENTURY MEDIA)

KKK

ISRAELI METALLERS CONTINUE TO WAGE HEAVY PEACE ON EPIC SIXTH OUTING

MANY METAL bands' ambitions extend to packing enormodomes and slapping their faces on patented hot sauce. Orphaned Land, meanwhile, are more interested in healing religious and social divides, one riff at a time. Their sixth opus continues their mission on from 2013's accessible All Is One, taking eastern scale symphonies to proggy frontiers, with All Knowing Eye's acoustic reveries recalling Pink Floyd's Comfortably Numb. But trying to unify disparate influences such as Socrates with Aldous Huxley, or guest appearances from crust punker Tomas Lindberg with Genesis guitarist Steve Hackett, sometimes proves jarring. Like pineapple on pizza, these combinations won't please everyone, but those that get it will be treated to a metal epic unlike any this year.

DOWNLOAD: Take My Hand.
FOR FANS OF: Melechesh, Dream Theater.
JAMES MACKINNON

LYRIC OF THE WEEK

'Nuclear, nuclear, nuclear alchemy.' One mention of nuclear is pretty intense, but *three*?! That's the kind of extremes that Swedish black metallers Watain go to. In the event of a nuclear apocalypse, only cockroaches and the band's leader, Erik Danielsson, will be left.

BAND: Watain
SONG: Nuclear Alchemy
ALBUM: Trident Wolf Eclipse

SLEEVE OF THE WEEK

The big question about the cover of Cane Hill's second album, Too Far Gone, is: what exactly is that mosquito drinking? Looks colourful, whatever it is. Much like the nu-metal revivalists.

VIDEO OF THE WEEK

THE GLORIOUS SONS, EVERYTHING IS ALRIGHT

In which the Canadian rockers' vocalist Brett Emmons sings into the camera, dressed all in white, before he's pelted with tomatoes, tar and feathers. Poor bloke is in a right state by the end of it. We don't blame him – those are some seriously stubborn stains.

CORROSION OF CONFORMITY
NO CROSS NO CROWN (NUCLEAR BLAST)

KKKK

PEPPER PIGS OUT ON RIFFS AS THE VOLUME DEALERS REASSEMBLE

WHATEVER YOUR start to the year has been like, 2018 just got a whole lot better. The reunited Deliverance-era line-up of CoC was pummelling UK venues as far back as 2015, but now they've finally put out an album with iconic rasper and riff-slinger Pepper Keenan back in the fold. As you might expect if you know anything about America's foremost volume dealers, it's those riffs that form the spine of the band, from the sludgy blues of Wolf Named Crow, to the absolutely crushing stoner groove of Forgive Me. Admittedly there's nothing overly fussy here, just prime slabs of Sabbath-inspired heft with the odd deft acoustic passage serving as a counterpoint. It's simple stuff, but it's as powerful and unstoppable as an avalanche.

DOWNLOAD: Forgive Me.
FOR FANS OF: Clutch, Orange Goblin.
PAUL TRAVERS

LIZZY FARRALL
ALL I SAID WAS NEVER HEARD (PURE NOISE)

KKK

CHESTER SINGER-SONGWRITER SHOWS REAL PROMISE ON DEBUT EP

LET'S BE honest, an artist bio that mentions that they got their start covering pop-punk songs on YouTube is rarely a signifier of quality. But in Lizzy Farrall's case, there's actually a whole lot of potential on show. Opening track Broken Toy demonstrates a natural knack for melody that continues throughout, while the sincerity in Lizzy's voice – particularly on Hollow Friends – adds weight to her songs. That said, the bar for rock-flavoured melancholy singer-songwriters has been raised by the likes of Julien Baker and Phoebe Bridgers putting out albums full of rich storytelling and emotional depth this year. Lyrically, this doesn't reach those levels. Still, it's definitely one to keep an eye (and an ear) on.

DOWNLOAD: Broken Toy.
FOR FANS OF: Frank Turner, Listener.
RYAN DE FREITAS

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY
GRIMMEST HITS (SPINEFARM)

KKKK

LEGENDARY OZZY GUITARIST STILL REIGNS SUPREME AS LORD OF BIKER DOOM

YOU'D BE forgiven for thinking this was a compilation record, because Grimmest Hits actually stands as Black Label Society's 10th album proper. Zakk Wylde has enjoyed a busy year back in the saddle for Ozzy Osbourne's band, as well as touring with his own covers group Zakk Sabbath, yet managed to find the time to craft 12 tracks of sludgey brilliance. Still every bit the red-blooded Viking marauder, the singer/guitarist howls and roars over riffs heavy enough to shift tectonic plates. Tapping into a Skynyrd/Zeppelin-inspired classic rock on the more soul-baring The Only Words, The Day That Heaven Had Gone Away and Nothing Left To Say, this is a well-rounded masterclass in heaviness.

DOWNLOAD: Room Of Nightmares.
FOR FANS OF: Black Sabbath, Megadeth.
AMIT SHARMA

LOUDER THAN Motörhead, more evil than Black Sabbath, and drunker than anyone, **VENOM** roared out of Newcastle in the early 1980s with very little grace. But the explosive din they created not only pushed the boundaries of what heavy metal could be, far more extreme than Iron Maiden or Judas Priest, but also laid a scraggy blueprint for an entire genre with their second album, Black Metal, in 1982.

Their live shows became the stuff of legend, with the band refusing to play any gigs early on, saying that venues couldn't

ISSUE 1703 JAN 06, 2018

"I THOUGHT, 'FUCK IT, I'LL PUT TITS AND MONEY OVER EVERYTHING!'"

DAVE WYNDORF

Monster Magnet

POWERTRIP (A&M, 1998)

DAVE WYNDORF AND CO. STOP GIVING A FUCK AND END UP IN THE STRATOSPHERE

WHEN SALES for Monster Magnet's third album Dopes To Infinity proved disappointing, their leader Dave Wyndorf began to think his band perhaps weren't as cool as he did. With nothing to lose, he placed his tongue in his cheek and decamped to Las Vegas to write a "completely sarcastic" musical comment on America that somehow proved their biggest-seller to date, despite maintaining the New Jersey band's psychedelia, punk and metal-tinged formula.

"It was a big record for us," reflects Dave today of a release celebrating its 20th anniversary this year: "It started off as the end, because we'd been on [record label] A&M for two records, but then it was a beginning…"

WHAT WAS YOUR STARTING POINT?

"Hip-hop was huge, so I remember thinking, 'Does this country only respond to tits and money?' Then I thought, 'Fuck it, I'll put tits and money over *everything*,' and write about America's obsession with those things."

YOU WROTE IN LAS VEGAS. WERE YOU BEING 'METHOD'?

DAVE WYNDORF (*VOCALS/GUITAR*): "I was inspired by Hunter S. Thompson; I'd been in love with Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas since I was 14. I got a room, took my 4-track recorder, a guitar, and a couple of fuzz boxes, and wrote the record in three weeks."

SPACE LORD WAS A HUGE SONG FOR YOU; WHAT INSPIRED IT?

"I'd hurt my knee, and had time off, so spent it in a dominatrix's apartment in New Orleans. Our record company forwarded me press from Europe, and in Germany they'd called me 'Space Lord'. She saw it and took the piss, saying: 'So you think you're the Space Lord?' I said, 'Someday, when I can walk, I'll make you pay for taunting me by writing a song.'"

THEN THERE'S BUMMER, WHICH IS A PRETTY RACY SONG…

"It's about touring the south of the States. You go there and women are saying, 'I was raised a good girl, but I want to be a *bad* girl.' The thin veneer of civilisation wears away real quick."

SEE YOU IN HELL IS ABOUT A HARROWING CONVERSATION YOU HAD WITH A STRANGER…

"I was riding on a bus from New York City back to New Jersey, and this ageing hippy guy just started talking. He told me about how him and his wife used to do a lot of drugs, and had a baby that they didn't know what to do with. He told me that they killed the baby and buried it under their kitchen. What do you do with something like that? Do I call the cops? It must have happened 40 years earlier. I was walking around with it stuck in my frontal lobe, so I wrote it down. It took me a while to shake that off."

WHAT DID THE ALBUM DO FOR THE BAND?

"It gave us a hit record, which I'll never be sorry about. It was our *look* that changed more, which did mean the more superficial aspects became branded. Powertrip put a picture of me in leather pants saying 'motherfucker' in people's minds."

WORDS: JAMES HICKIE

ON THE STEREO

1 DON BROCO – COME OUT TO LA
This is exactly what you'd expect Don Broco singing about Los Angeles to sound like, which is a compliment. Rowdy stuff.

2 CLUTCH – 150 PESOS
The Maryland legends have introduced this new track on their U.S. tour. Unsurprisingly, it's an instant classic.

3 TURBOWOLF – DOMINO
It makes sense, given the Bristol rockers have gone big on their latest track, it stands to reason they'd get Royal Blood's Mike Kerr involved. It's an epic listen.

4 TRC – MOANER
Great news: #TeamTRC are back, and sounding more TRC than ever. Smashing it!

5 SONS – RISE
The Brighton duo have unleashed this big, snarling slab of punk rock brilliant… oh, and it's a little bit political, and all.

SCREAM SERENITY

EYE OF THE STORM (3MS)

K

UK ROCKERS TRUDGE A WELL-WORN PATH TO THE LAND OF '00S MEDIOCRITY

THE 'MEH' title of Scream Serenity's debut full-length lets you know you're not heading into overly original territory. Unfortunately, it's the most dynamic thing about the record. Of course, it's wholly possible that the Suffolk rockers are utterly sincere in what they do, but given that what they do is wall-to-wall recycled nu-rawk from the school of SOiL, Godsmack and Trust Company, and overwrought Matt Tuck-esque vocals, we may never know for sure. Even their own titles seem intent on spiting them: opener The Best Of The Worst *is* the only half-decent thing here, while the Puddle Of Mudd-esque Run Away seems like a pretty solid suggestion.

DOWNLOAD: The Best Of The Worst.
FOR FANS OF: Nickelback, SOiL.
DAN SLESSOR

TINY MOVING PARTS

SWELL (BIG SCARY MONSTERS)

KKK

MINNESOTA EMO-ROCKERS BRING THE HEFTY FEELS WITH THEM

SWELL IS a suitable name for a Tiny Moving Parts record. Pretty much every thought and feeling that the Minnesota three-piece have put to tape has been on the bruised, puffy side, and in need of a good ice pack. While the plaintive outlook hasn't shifted for their latest album, here its impact benefits from some of the trio's smartest songwriting to date. Although the record exists in an almost constant state of agitation, largely communicated via singer Dylan Mattheisen's Tom DeLonge-ish wail, the power is held in its rare quiet moments – a trick that's simple but often devastating. Mixed in with the group's math-rock intricacies (albeit a lighter touch this time around) and you're left with a piece of work that's a real charmer.

DOWNLOAD: Feel Alive.
FOR FANS OF: Modern Baseball, Tigers Jaw.
TOM SHEPHERD

handle their pyro or sheer power.

There's plenty of this captured on **ASSAULT! (KKK)**, a six-disc box set of live stuff and rare studio recordings, collecting together the band's series of Assault EPs exclusively sold in America, Japan and Canada. Other instalments from France, Germany and Scandinavia were also released without the band's input, also gathered here. It's a Hell of a lot of Venom to ingest in one go, to be honest. Only die-hard Venom fans will listen to this many versions of Die Hard in one sitting, and as brilliant songs like Witching Hour and Bloodlust are, you can hear them too many times.

Listened to as originally intended, however, as contained EPs, these are snapshots of one of the most uncompromising and unreconstructed bands in history tearing it up. Their wrecking-ball live power is crammed onto each disc, and you can almost feel frontman Cronos' breath and spittle as he exhorts you to '*Lay down your souls to the gods rock'n'roll!*' during Black Metal. Which, really, is what you want from a Venom live album.

WORDS: NICK RUSKELL

KLOBBER

MUST HAVES

ALL THE BEST GEAR FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF PLANET ROCK AND BEYOND!

Since the new Fall Out Boy album is very nearly upon us, here's a T-shirt with a weird see-through version of the cover art on the front.

$18.67 (£13.93) Hottopic.com

If you fill this glass with anything other than Lemmy's fave Jack and Coke, then it will spontaneously shatter into pieces. You've been warned.

£7.99 Grindstore.com

The theme park on this Rick and Morty jumper looks a bit gnarly. We'll stick to Alton Towers.

£22.99 Grindstore.com

There's two moods you can take going into the New Year, and this website has T-shirts to suit both.

£22 each Wheretonext.today

Want a mate to never sleep again? And maybe mysteriously fall out of a window? Then buy them the doll from the Annabelle movies.

$37.42 (£27.95) Hottopic.com

Two drinking receptacles on one page is excessive, but it's important to stay hydrated. Brendon Urie would agree.

$7.74 (£5.78) Hottopic.com

The people on this shirt obviously aren't fans of Matt Heafy's screaming. They should go live on the FOB shirt up top.

£17.99 Impericon.com

No, we won't jump in the fire, not today. You're not the boss of us, Metallica patch.

£2.25 Grindstore.com

We wanna know how Green Day asked God who his fave band are, but we're more curious as to why Billie's holding a table tennis bat…

$16.42 (£12.26) Hottopic.com

Architects can't be trusted with anything, since they've gone and smashed this bloody statue on their new tee.

£14.99 Impericon.com

System Of A Down can't keep that bird down. Even using all the red string they've tied it up with.
$16.42 (£12.32) Hottopic.com

This GAME BOY keyring is not quite to scale, but it'll help you re-live your youth, sooo…
£1.99 Grindstore.com

We have no clue how you play a game that involves putting cardboard waffles in a cardboard toaster, but it looks like it'll probably be quite fun.
$24.67 (£18.51) Hottopic.com

'*Bring that shit in*,' yells Zack de la Rocha on Take The Power Back. This bag is perfect for bringing/taking shit places.
£37.99 Impericon.com

Those are not nuts, Deez Nuts, they are pills. Pistachios do not need a child lock.
£13.99 Impericon.com

These lights have a special Darth Vader heavy breathing function, which is actually quite relaxing if you have trouble sleeping at night. Just turn it on and… Zzzz! You're off.
£14.99 Grindstore.com

MOVIE, SHAKE, HIDE

JANUARY IS COLD AND SHIT. DON'T GO OUTSIDE. STAY IN AND WATCH THESE NEW DVD RELEASES INSTEAD…

Well mother! was a weird film, wasn't it? One to watch on your own, and definitely not with expectant parents. If you don't know what we mean, you'll see.
£9.99
Amazon.co.uk

"We all float down here," said Pennywise in the new IT movie. Especially if you're a DVD – they have excellent buoyancy.
£9.99
Amazon.co.uk

The award for Movie That Looked Like It Was Going To Be Absolute Shit But Actually Turned Out To Be Really Funny goes to: Kingsman: The Golden Circle.
£9.99
Amazon.co.uk

Based on the The Algiers Motel Killings, Detroit is for movie lovers who also fancy a history lesson. It's more shocking than Manson in the '90s.
£9.99
Amazon.co.uk

This Blue Planet II DVD is really expensive, but that's because it's in 4K Ultra which means you'll be able to see the globs of whale snot floating around. Lovely.
£29.99
Zavvi.com

Sydney Rae White from London rockers The Wild Things appears in this movie, about a loony American who decides to take down terrorists alone.
£13
Amazon.co.uk

JUNIOR

THE RISING UK POP-PUNKS ARE KICKING 2018 OFF IN STYLE – WELL, AS LONG AS THEY GET OUT OF THE GYM IN TIME…

WORDS: JAKE RICHARDSON **PHOTO:** NEIL A. LIM SANG

HEY, MARK! WHICH CITIES IN THE UK ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO ON THIS RUN?

MARK ANDREWS (*VOCALS/BASS*): "I'm obviously going to be biased to Cardiff, because we love playing our hometown, and it's great to see all our friends come out. But more importantly, the last time we played Cardiff we saw loads of people we didn't know, and that made us think that we must be doing something right!"

AND BECAUSE OF YOUR WRESTLING CONNECTIONS, DO YOU GET A LOT OF WRESTLING FANS COMING DOWN TO JUNIOR SHOWS?

"Yeah, we see a lot of wrestling T-shirts in the crowd – it's awesome to see the crossover of fans. It's great to have people who like my wrestling then check out my band, and it's wicked to just witness that relationship between wrestling and alternative music. But recently it's happened the other way around, which is so much cooler!"

THAT RULES. WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR DOWNTIME ON TOUR?

"We tend to just listen to music – we've listened to Linkin Park's Hybrid Theory so many times over the past few months! Me and Matt [Attard, vocals/guitar] often try to find a local gym, because I've still got to weigh-up my wrestling with the band. We even brought a skipping rope on tour once, but as we got lazier, that soon fizzled out. We're often looking up the nearest Wetherspoon, too!"

> ***"WE'RE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR A WETHERSPOON ON TOUR!"***
> **MARK ANDREWS**

NOTHING LIKE A GOOD OLD 'SPOONS… WHAT'S BEEN THE CRAZIEST THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU ON TOUR RECENTLY?

"When we were in Canada, me and Matt were walking back from the gym minding our own business, and then we suddenly started sinking into the floor. We looked at each other in a pretty terrified way, then we jumped out and realised we'd walked right into a load of wet cement! All Canadians are so polite, so the workman who was in charge of it apologised to us, and we said, 'It's not your fault – we're ignorant Brits who've just ruined your morning's work!'"

SOUNDS LIKE A STICKY SITUATION… WILL WE HEAR NEW MUSIC AT THESE SHOWS?

"We're going to be introducing some new songs into our set! Up until now, we've been using our back catalogue and songs off our Juniorland EP, and generally sticking to our guns with regards to the live shows. It'll be nice to have a surprise for people and let them hear some new stuff from us."

DOES THAT MEAN WE CAN EXPECT AN ALBUM IN 2018?

"We've been writing for the past 12 months, and we've got a lot of material that we really want to put out there. We've been sitting on it and waiting for the right time, but that time is fast approaching, and we're getting impatient about showing people. We're gonna be in the studio from January, and later in the year we'll release a full-length!"

DATES: Bristol Louisiana January 4, Torquay Apple & Parrot 5, Bournemouth Anvil 6, Brighton Prince Albert 7, Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach February 13, Basingstoke Sanctuary 14, Plymouth Junction 15, Cheltenham Frog & Fiddle 16, Newcastle Jumpin' Jacks 17, Edinburgh Opium 18.

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BOOKING NOW

36 CRAZYFISTS
Glasgow Cathouse January 18, Manchester Academy III 19, O2 Academy2 Birmingham 20, London O2 Academy Islington 21.

A PERFECT CIRCLE
O2 Apollo Manchester June 12, London O2 Academy Brixton 13.

ALESTORM
O2 Academy Liverpool February 9, Sheffield Corporation 10, Newcastle Uni 11, Aberdeen Garage 13, O2 ABC Glasgow 14, Belfast Mandela Hall 15, Dublin Tivoli 16, Birmingham HRH Metal 17, O2 Ritz Manchester 18, Leeds Stylus 20, Norwich Waterfront 21, London O2 Forum Kentish Town 22, Brighton Concorde II 23, Bristol Motion 24, Southampton Engine Rooms 25. Support: The Dread Crew Of Oddwood, Rumahoy.

ALIEN ANT FARM
O2 Academy Bristol February 6, London O2 Forum Kentish Town 7, O2 Ritz Manchester 8, Norwich Waterfront 10, O2 Academy Leeds 11, Birmingham O2 Institute 12, Dublin Academy 14, Belfast Limelight II 15, Glasgow Garage 16, O2 Academy Newcastle 17, Nottingham Rock City 18. Support: SOiL, Local H.

ALL TIME LOW
Glasgow SECC March 12, Cardiff Motorpoint Arena 14, Birmingham Genting Arena 15, Manchester Arena 16, London Alexandra Palace 17.

ANDREW W.K.
Cardiff Great Hall April 13, London O2 Forum Kentish Town 14, O2 Academy2 Birmingham 15, Norwich Waterfront 18, Portsmouth Pyramids Wedgewood Rooms 19, O2 Ritz Manchester 20, Glasgow Garage 21.

ARCANE ROOTS
Gateshead Sage February 27, London Heaven March 1, Manchester Gorilla 2, Sheffield Leadmill 3, Glasgow Oran Mor 4, O2 Institute2 Birmingham 6, Bristol Trinity 8. Support: Brutus.

ARCH ENEMY
O2 ABC Glasgow February 9, Nottingham Rock City 10, London Camden KOKO 11, O2 Ritz Manchester 13, O2 Academy Bristol 14. Support: Wintersun, Tribulation.

ARCHITECTS
London Alexandra Palace February 3. Support: While She Sleeps, Counterparts.

AS IT IS
Nottingham Rescue Rooms March 9, Manchester Academy II 10, Glasgow Garage 11, O2 Institute2 Birmingham 13, Cardiff Globe 15, London Camden KOKO 16. Support: Like Pacific, Grayscale.

ASTROID BOYS
Brighton Haunt March 7, London Tufnell Park Dome 8, Norwich Waterfront 9, Birmingham Asylum 10, Manchester Rebellion 11, Glasgow King Tut's 12, Newcastle Riverside 13, Leeds Brudenell Social Club 14, Nottingham Rescue Rooms 15, Cardiff Y Plas 30.

AT THE DRIVE IN
London O2 Academy Brixton March 9, O2 Academy Newcastle 10, O2 Academy Birmingham 12, O2 Apollo Manchester 13, O2 Academy Glasgow 15. Support: Death From Above, Le Butcherettes.

BLACK VEIL BRIDES / ASKING ALEXANDRIA
O2 Academy Birmingham January 23, Manchester Academy 24, O2 Academy Glasgow 25, London O2 Academy Brixton 27.

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY
London Royal Albert Hall April 5, Dublin Tivoli 7, Belfast Limelight 8 – 9.

BLACK MOTH
Brighton Hope & Ruin February 7, London Boston Music Room 8. Support: Grave Lines.

BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL
Line-up: Judas Priest, Gojira, Nightwish, Emperor, Nails, Devildriver, Watain, Orden Ogan, Combichrist, Memoriam, Septicflesh, Doro, Fozzy, Bloodbath. Derby Catton Hall Park August 9 – 12.

BOWLING FOR SOUP
O2 Academy Glasgow February 9, O2 Academy Newcastle 10, O2 Academy Sheffield 11, Nottingham Rock City 12, O2 Academy Birmingham 13, Norwich UEA 14, O2 Apollo Manchester 15, Cardiff Motorpoint Arena 16, London O2 Academy Brixton 17. Support: The Aquabats!, Army Of Freshmen.

BRIAN FALLON & THE HOWLING WEATHER
O2 Institute Birmingham February 20, O2 Ritz Manchester 21, O2 ABC Glasgow 22, London KOKO Camden 23, Nottingham Rock City 24, Bristol SXW 25, Newcastle Boiler Shop March 8, Leeds Beckett 9. Support: Dave Hause.

CARNIFEX
London Tufnell Park Dome February 26, Birmingham Mama Roux's 27, Glasgow G2 28, Manchester Academy III March 1, Leeds Key Club 2, Bridgend Hobos 3. Support: Oceano, Aversions Crown, Disentomb.

THE DAMNED
O2 Academy Newcastle January 26, Dundee Caird Hall 27, O2 Academy Glasgow 28, O2 Academy Leeds 30, Manchester Academy 31, O2 Academy Birmingham February 1, O2 Academy Leicester 3, Nottingham Rock City 4, Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall 6, Southend Cliffs Pavilion 7, Cardiff Great Hall 9, O2 Academy Bristol 10, O2 Academy Bournemouth 11, O2 Guildhall Southampton 13, Bexhill De La Warr Pavilion 14, London O2 Forum 17.

DANCE GAVIN DANCE / VEIL OF MAYA
Birmingham Asylum March 3, Bristol Marble Factory 4, Newcastle Riverside 5, Glasgow Garage 6, Manchester Academy II 7, Nottingham Rescue Rooms 8, London O2 Academy Islington 9.

DESERTFEST
Line-up: Monster Magnet, Nebula, Eyehategod, Jex Thoth, Planet Of Zeus, Black Moth, The Black Wizards, Graveyard, Napalm Death, Warning, Eyehategod, Winterfylleth, Five The Hierophant. London Camden May 4 – 6 @ various venues.

DON BROCO
Portsmouth Pyramids February 8, O2 Academy Bristol 9, Cardiff Great Hall 10, Norwich UEA 12, Nottingham Rock City 13, O2 Academy Birmingham 15, Manchester Academy 16, O2 Academy Leeds 17, Newcastle Northumbria Institute 19, Aberdeen Garage 20, Glasgow Barrowland 21.

DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL
Line-up: Ozzy Osbourne, Avenged Sevenfold, Guns N' Roses, Marilyn Manson, BABYMETAL, Asking Alexandria, Black Veil Brides, Alexisonfire, Bullet For My Valentine, Rise Against, Parkway Drive, Body Count, The Hives, In This Moment, Neck Deep, Meshuggah, Mayday Parade, The Pink Slips, WSTR, Dreamstate. Derby Donington Park June 8 – 10.

DREAM STATE
Guildford Boileroom February 8, Scunthorpe Cafe Indiependent 9, Oxford Cellar 10, Birmingham Asylum2 11, Bristol Exchange 12, Manchester Star & Garter 14, Stoke Sugarmill 15, Peterborough Met Lounge 16, Hull Adelphi 18, York Basement 19, Derby Hairy Dog 23, Tunbridge Wells Forum 25, London Camden Assembly 26. Support: Chapter And Verse.

EUROPE
Manchester Academy September 14, Glasgow Barrowland 15, O2 Academy Newcastle 17, Nottingham Rock City 18, O2 Institute Birmingham 19, Cardiff St. David's Hall 21, Portsmouth Pyramids Centre 22, London Royal Albert Hall 23, Brighton Dome 24. Support: King King.

EVANESCENCE
London Royal Festival Hall March 30 – 31, O2 Apollo Manchester 2, Nottingham Arena 3, Glasgow Armadillo 5, Sheffield City Hall 6.

FALL OUT BOY
London Brixton Electric January 11. Birmingham Barclaycard Arena March 27, Cardiff Motorpoint Arena 28, Manchester Arena 29, London O2 Arena 31.

FANGCLUB
Leeds Lending Rooms January 23, Glasgow Garage Attic 25, Birmingham Sunflower Lounge 26, London Thousand Island 27.

FEEDER
William Aston Hall Wrexham March 5, O2 Academy Bristol 7, Norwich Nick Rayns LCR UEA 8, Manchester Academy 10, Glasgow Barrowland 11, O2 Academy Leeds 13, O2 Academy Birmingham 14, Nottingham Rock City 16, London O2 Academy Brixton 17.

FOO FIGHTERS
Manchester Etihad Stadium June 19, London Stadium 22 – 23. Support added: Wolf Alice (19 and 22 only), Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes (22 only), The Kills (23 only), Slaves (23 only).

THE FRONT BOTTOMS
Manchester Albert Hall February 9, Glasgow Barrowland 10, O2 Academy Newcastle 11, Dublin Vicar Street 13, Belfast Mandela Hall 14, O2 Academy Sheffield 16, Nottingham Rock City 17, Portsmouth Pyramids Centre 24, Norwich Waterfront 25, O2 Institute Birmingham 26, O2 Academy Bristol 27, London Camden Roundhouse 28. Support: The Smith Street Band, Brick + Mortar.

IRON MAIDEN
Newcastle Metro Radio Arena July 31, Belfast SSE Arena August 2, Aberdeen AECC BHGE Arena 4, Manchester Arena 6, Birmingham Genting Arena 7, London O2 Arena 10. Support: Killswitch Engage.

LACUNA COIL
London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire January 19.

LOATHE / HOLDING ABSENCE
Bristol Thekla February 28, Manchester Star & Garter March 1, Glasgow Audio 2, Newcastle Think Tank? 3, Leeds Key Club 4, Nottingham Bodega 6, Birmingham Asylum 7, London Boston Music Room 8, Bournemouth Anvil 9, Bridgend Hobos 10.

LOWER THAN ATLANTIS
Lincoln Engine Shed April 2, Cambridge Junction 3, Leamington Spa Assembly 4, Swansea Sin City 6, Pontypridd Muni Arts Centre 7, Gloucester Guildhall 8, Bath Komedia 9, Exeter Lemongrove 11, Southampton Engine Rooms 12, Watford Colosseum 13, Southend Chinnerys 14, Brighton Concorde II 15, O2 Academy Oxford May 3, Reading Sub89 4, Wrexham Central Station 5, Liverpool Hangar34 7, Aberdeen Lemon Tree 8, Edinburgh Liquid Rooms 9, Middlesbrough Empire 11, Hull Welly 12, York Fibbers 13, Sheffield Plug 14.

MACHINE HEAD
O2 Guildhall Southampton May 13, Cardiff University 14, O2 Academy Bristol 15, O2 Academy Birmingham 17, London Camden Roundhouse 18 – 19, Nottingham Rock City 21, O2 Academy Newcastle 22, O2 Academy Glasgow 23, Manchester Academy 25.

MARMOZETS
Cardiff Tramshed February 2, Southampton Engine Rooms 3, Brighton Concorde II 4, Cambridge Junction 6, London Student Central ULU 7, Nottingham Rescue Rooms 8, Newcastle Riverside 9, Sheffield Leadmill 11, Edinburgh Liquid Room 12. Support: Queen Zee And The Sasstones.

THE MENZINGERS
Dublin Whelans January 28, Belfast Limelight 29, Bristol SWX 31, Glasgow SWG3 February 1, O2 Ritz Manchester 2, London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire 3. Support: PUP, Cayetana.

MILK TEETH
Bristol Exchange March 13, Oxford Bullingdon 14, Liverpool Buyers Club 15, Huddersfield Parish 16, Edinburgh Mash House 17, Manchester Deaf Institute 19, Birmingham Mama Roux's 20, Milton Keynes Craufurd Arms 21, London Camden Underworld 23, Bournemouth Anvil 24, Plymouth Junction 25. Support: Fangclub, Nervus.

MISS MAY I
Southampton Talking Heads January 22, Glasgow G2 23, Birmingham Mama Roux's 24, Manchester Dead Shed 25, London Camden Underworld 26, Bristol Exchange 27. Support: Fit For A King, Void Of Vision, Currents.

MODERN LIFE IS WAR
Brighton Haunt June 25, Leeds Brudenell Social Club 26, Bristol Exchange 27, London Camden Underworld 28.

MONGOL HORDE
Glasgow King Tut's January 25, Manchester Academy III 26, O2 Institute2 Birmingham 27, London King's Cross Scala 28.

MOOSE BLOOD
Nottingham Rock City March 2, Manchester Academy 3, Glasgow QMU 5, O2 Academy Newcastle 6, O2 Institute Birmingham 8, O2 Academy Bristol 9, London Camden Roundhouse 10. Support: The Dangerous Summer.

MOTIONLESS IN WHITE
Southampton Engine Rooms January 18, O2 Academy Bristol 19, Leeds Stylus 20, Glasgow Garage 22, Newcastle Riverside 23, London KOKO Camden 25, O2 Institute Birmingham 26, O2 Ritz Manchester 27, Norwich Waterfront 28. Support: Cane Hill, Ice Nine Kills.

NICKELBACK
Glasgow SSE Hydro May 3, Leeds First Direct Arena 5, Liverpool Echo Arena 7, Manchester Arena 8, Birmingham Genting Arena 10, London O2 Arena 11, Nottingham Motorpoint Arena 13. Support: Seether.

PACESHIFTERS
St Albans Horn February 14, Liverpool Sound 15, Glasgow Garage 16, Newcastle Think Tank? 17, Leeds Brudenell Social Club 18, Nottingham Bodega 20, London Assembly Camden 21, Tunbridge Wells Forum 22, Brighton Sticky Mike's Frog Bar 23.

PARADISE LOST
Colchester Arts Centre February 15, Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms 16, Bristol Thekla 17, Nottingham Rescue Rooms 18, Belfast Limelight II 20, Dublin Tivoli 21, Glasgow Classic Grand 22, Manchester Gorilla 23.

PARAMORE
Cardiff Motorpoint Arena January 11, London O2 Arena 12, Birmingham Genting Arena 14, Manchester Arena 19, Glasgow SSE Hydro 20.

PEARL JAM
London O2 Arena June 18 – 19.

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE
London Finsbury Park June 30. Support: Iggy Pop, The Hives, Run The Jewels.

RAMBLIN' MAN FAIR
Line-up: Halestorm, Blackberry Smoke, Sons Of Apollo, Steve Earle And The Dukes. Maidstone Mote Park June 30 – July 1.

REEF / THE WILDHEARTS / TERRORVISION
Manchester Academy May 4, Birmingham Digbeth Arena 5, London Eventim Apollo Hammersmith 6, O2 Academy Glasgow 19, O2 Academy Newcastle 20.

ROLO TOMASSI
Glasgow Audio April 3, Manchester Deaf Institute 4, Birmingham Flapper 5, Bristol Exchange 6, London Garage 7, Leeds Strangeforms 8.

SEAWAY
Bristol Exchange January 10, Nottingham Bodega 11, Leeds Key Club 12, Glasgow Stereo 13, Manchester Rebellion 14, O2 Institute3 Birmingham 15, Southampton Joiners 16, London Garage 17.

SKINDRED
Norwich UEA April 19, O2 Guildhall Southampton 20, Nottingham Rock City 21, Manchester Academy 22, O2 ABC Glasgow 24, O2 Academy Bristol 25, O2 Academy Leeds 27, London O2 Academy Brixton 28, O2 Institute Birmingham 29. Support: CKY.

SLAM DUNK FESTIVAL
Line-up: Jimmy Eat World, Taking Back Sunday, Sleeping With Sirens, State Champs, Four Year Strong, Trash Boat, Good Charlotte, PVRIS, Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, Thursday, Creeper, Every Time I Die, Knuckle Puck, Real Friends, Crown The Empire. Leeds City Centre May 26, Hatfield Park 27, Birmingham NEC Arena 28.

TESTAMENT
Bristol Motion March 29, O2 Ritz Manchester 30, O2 Institute Birmingham 31, Dublin Vicar Street April 1, Glasgow QMU 2, London Camden KOKO 4. Support: Annihilator, Vader.

THIRTY SECONDS TO MARS
Cardiff Motorpoint Arena March 23, Manchester Arena 24, Glasgow SSE Hydro 25, London O2 Arena 27, Birmingham Barclaycard Arena 29.

TONIGHT ALIVE
Manchester O2 Ritz March 6, London KOKO 8, Glasgow QMU 10, Nottingham Rock City 11, Leeds Stylus 12, Bristol Motion 13. Support: With Confidence, The Gospel Youth.

TRIVIUM
O2 Academy Bristol April 16, O2 Birmingham Academy 17, O2 Academy Glasgow 19, Manchester Academy 20, London O2 Academy Brixton 21. Support: Code Orange, Power Trip, Venom Prison.

THE USED
Nottingham Rock City February 11, O2 Ritz Manchester 12, O2 Academy Bristol 15, London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire 16.

WATERPARKS
O2 Institute Birmingham March 1, Dublin Academy 2, Leeds Stylus 3, London KOKO Camden 4, O2 ABC Glasgow 6, O2 Ritz Manchester 7, Cardiff Y Plas 8, Southampton Engine Rooms 9, Brighton Concorde II 10.

WHILE SHE SLEEPS
O2 Academy Bristol February 5, O2 Institute Birmingham 6, O2 ABC Glasgow 8, O2 Ritz Manchester 10.

WITHIN TEMPTATION
O2 Academy Birmingham November 9, O2 Apollo Manchester 10, O2 Academy Glasgow 11, London O2 Academy Brixton 13.

THE XCERTS
O2 Academy3 Leicester February 18, Sheffield Plug 19, Dublin Whelans 20, O2 ABC Glasgow 23, Aberdeen Garage 24, Stockton-On-Tees Georgian Theatre 25, Manchester Deaf Institute 26, Cambridge Portland Arms 28, Wolverhampton Slade Rooms March 1, London Heaven 2, Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach 3, Southampton Joiners 4.

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ON SALE JANUARY 10

EMBRACE THE MANIA

EDITORIAL

WHAT DO YOU MOST WANT TO SEE HAPPEN IN 2018?

EDITOR: Sam Coare (*Axl Rose to come to the Kerrang! Awards*)
ART EDITOR: Steve Beech (*For England to not be shit*)
ASSOCIATE EDITOR (REVIEWS): Nick Ruskell (*Extinction-level event. Or final Sabbath show at Villa Park*)
DEPUTY ART EDITOR: Matt Dykzeul (*Kill Your Idols in London*)
PRODUCTION EDITOR: Emily Carter (*Billie Joe Armstrong to become my best friend… plz*)
LISTINGS EDITOR: James Hingle (*Donald Trump impeached. Jeremy Corbyn made PM. Danny Dyer gets a knighthood…*)
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Katie Parsons (*Less Trump. More triumph*), Jennyfer J. Walker (*A new Panic! album, a Brendon Urie hardcore side-project and a Brendon Urie Christmas record*)
DIGITAL EDITOR: Bob Foster (*Full UFO disclosure or a proper Cro-Mags reunion. Both pretty unlikely, but a guy can dream*)

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THE ULTIMATE ROCKSTAR TEST

CHRIS MOTIONLESS

MOTIONLESS IN WHITE

IS MIW'S FRONTMAN DOA IN THE PARTYING STAKES? THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT...

ON ROCK'N'ROLL...

WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE FOR A DARE?

"I'm more of a truth kind of guy – I'd much rather pick that than do a dare! It's hard to think of any, but I've had my fair share of running around the streets naked, screaming, at two in the morning. That happened in high school at points – there'd be a gathering of friends at my house, so it probably happened to a bunch of people."

WHAT'S THE LONGEST YOU'VE MANAGED TO GO WITHOUT SLEEP?

"About three weeks ago, we filmed two music videos and did a photoshoot in three days. I didn't sleep through the entire time. We'd be filming all day, plus it would take a couple of hours to get my hair and make-up done. As far as pleasure is concerned, I've done about two days of staying up in a 'Let's see how long we can do this' way."

WHAT'S BEEN YOUR WORST INJURY WHILE OUT ON THE ROAD?

"We were playing in Buffalo [New York state] on Warped Tour, and I already had this bad, chipped tooth in the back of my mouth. In the middle of the set, the tooth cracked. It didn't bother me until later that night, when I woke up feeling like someone was drilling a hole through my jaw. We were coming through Scranton [Pennsylvania] for our hometown show, so I went to my dentist to get the tooth pulled out before the set. That sucked!"

What time was your appointment? Tooth-hurty?

ON FAILURES AND FUCK-UPS...

WHAT MIW SONG WOULD YOU ERASE, AND WHY?

"It's a song our fans really love called City Lights. We were after a slow, emotional ballad kind of thing. At the time I liked it, but when I hear it now, I'm embarrassed by it."

WHAT'S BEEN YOUR MOST EMBARRASSING GIG TO DATE?

"I'm going to go with Knotfest 2016. We went on 45 minutes late because Slayer's soundcheck ran over, and the crowd thought it was our fault. They were screaming 'Fuck Motionless!' thinking we were being divas. We already had everyone hating us before we even took to the stage, and then every guitar cut out, and the snare broke in the first song."

This story would have been better if you'd had it out with Kerry King afterwards...

LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS...

WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST ENCOUNTER YOU'VE EVER HAD WITH A FAN?

"The first time was the weirdest for me. On Warped Tour, some kid gave me a box with his blood and hair in it. That felt pretty gnarly. It was such a unique gift, and *very* personal. I didn't really know how to receive that."

"SOME KID GAVE ME A BOX WITH HIS BLOOD AND HAIR IN IT..."

CHRIS MOTIONLESS

WHO IS THE MOST FAMOUS PERSON IN YOUR PHONEBOOK?

"I'm going to go with Dee Snider from Twisted Sister. Both him and his son have worked with us on our music videos in the past – Dee was actually *in* one of our videos [Immaculate Misconception]. I'm a bit of an asshole – he's texted me a few times and I ended up spacing on it by not replying. Then I get scared that I'll look like an even bigger asshole for replying to him so late!"

We don't think Dee's gonna take that...

ON THE HYPOTHETICAL...

MARILYN MANSON STARTS TURNING UP TO YOUR GIGS PRETENDING HE'S YOU. WHAT DO YOU SAY TO HIM?

"God... if he's telling everyone he's me, I'd be really confused. Especially considering everyone in the whole world seems to think *I'm* the one trying to be *him*. I guess I'd try to get away with doing the same thing in his camp (*laughs*)!"

YOU'RE OFFERED $10 BILLION TO PLAY A FESTIVAL, BUT ON THE CONDITION YOU REMOVE ALL YOUR PIERCINGS AND TATTOOS...

"Fuck yeah – I'd take the money! I hate most of my tattoos, so not only am I getting money to get rid of these tattoos I don't like, there will also be money for new ones I do like. Let's get that shit lasered off, do the gig, take the money and get some I like. I'm actually getting some removed right now, so I'm already there!"

The real question is: why did you get so many tattoos you hate?

SPIRITUAL HEADMELTER...

YOUR LAST ALBUM WAS CALLED REINCARNATE. DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE CONCEPT OF IT?

"So much of me doesn't want death to be *it* – I want there to be some form of afterlife. I believe in reincarnation more than anything else, as well as past lives and the idea this current one can be implanted in some form of new life. If I came back as an animal, it would probably be a giraffe as I'm so tall!"

Imagine the number of tattoos you could get on a giraffe neck...

THE VERDICT

UNSURPRISINGLY GIVEN HIS GENTLE GIANT STATUS, CHRIS IS A BIT TOO NICE TO BE IN THE UPPER ECHELONS OF EXCESS

SCORE 54%

THE LEADERBOARD

1	**AL JOURGENSEN** – MINISTRY	100%
2	**ALICE COOPER**	99%
3	**BEN BRUCE** – ASKING ALEXANDRIA	98%
4	**ICE-T** – BODY COUNT	96%
5	**AWSTEN KNIGHT** – WATERPARKS	96%
6	**ZACKY VENGEANCE** – AVENGED SEVENFOLD	95%
7	**AHREN STRINGER** – THE AMITY AFFLICTION	95%
8	**RENA LOVELIS** – HEY VIOLET	94%
9	**SYNYSTER GATES** – AVENGED SEVENFOLD	94%
10	**GREG GRAFFIN** – BAD RELIGION	94%
11	**REBA MEYERS** – CODE ORANGE	93%
25	**CHRIS ROBERTSON** – BLACK STONE CHERRY	52%
26	**CONOR MASON** – NOTHING BUT THIEVES	38%
27	**JOHNNY CHRIST** – AVENGED SEVENFOLD	31%

WORDS: AMIT SHARMA PHOTO: JENN FIVE

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